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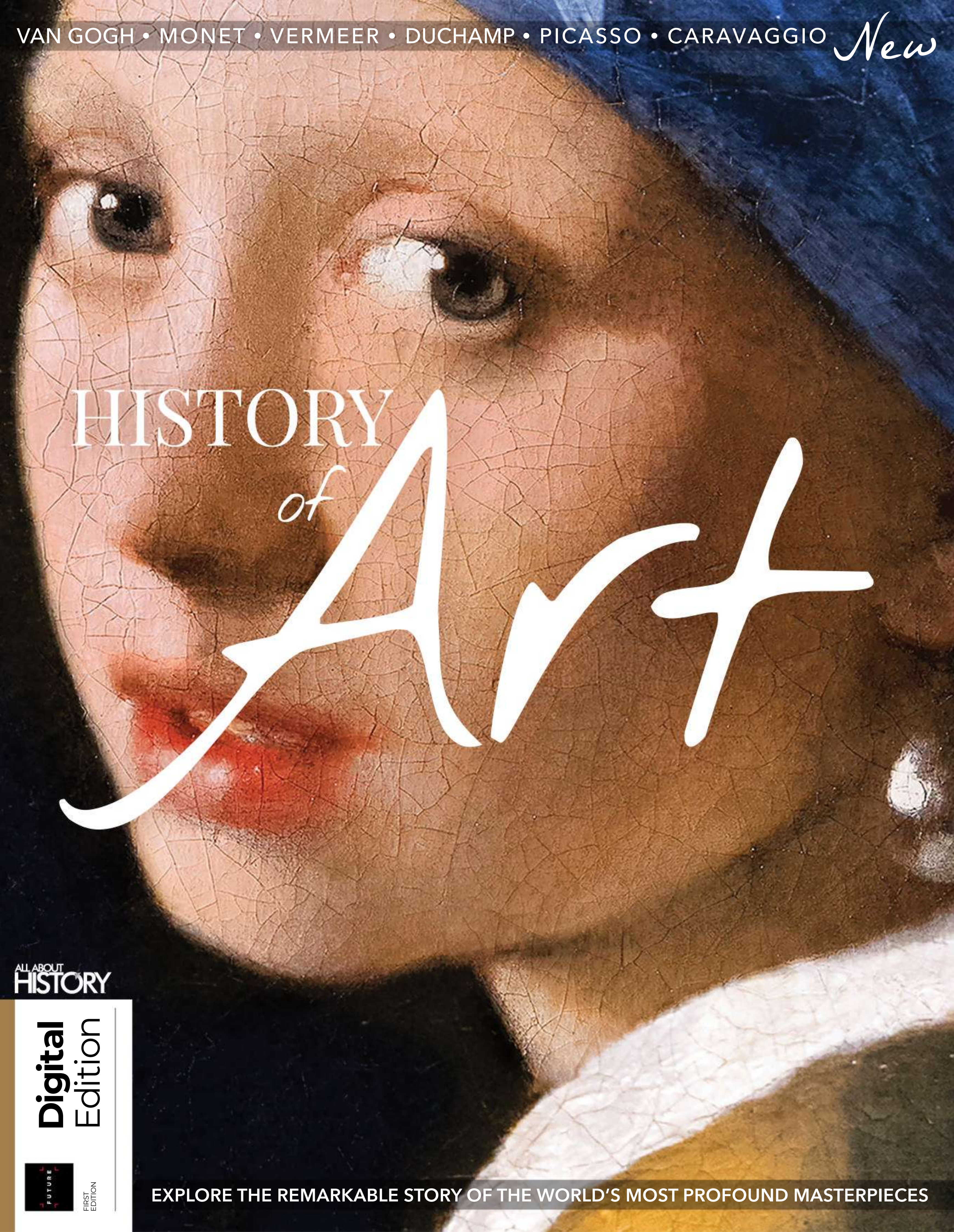
# HISTORY *of* *Art*



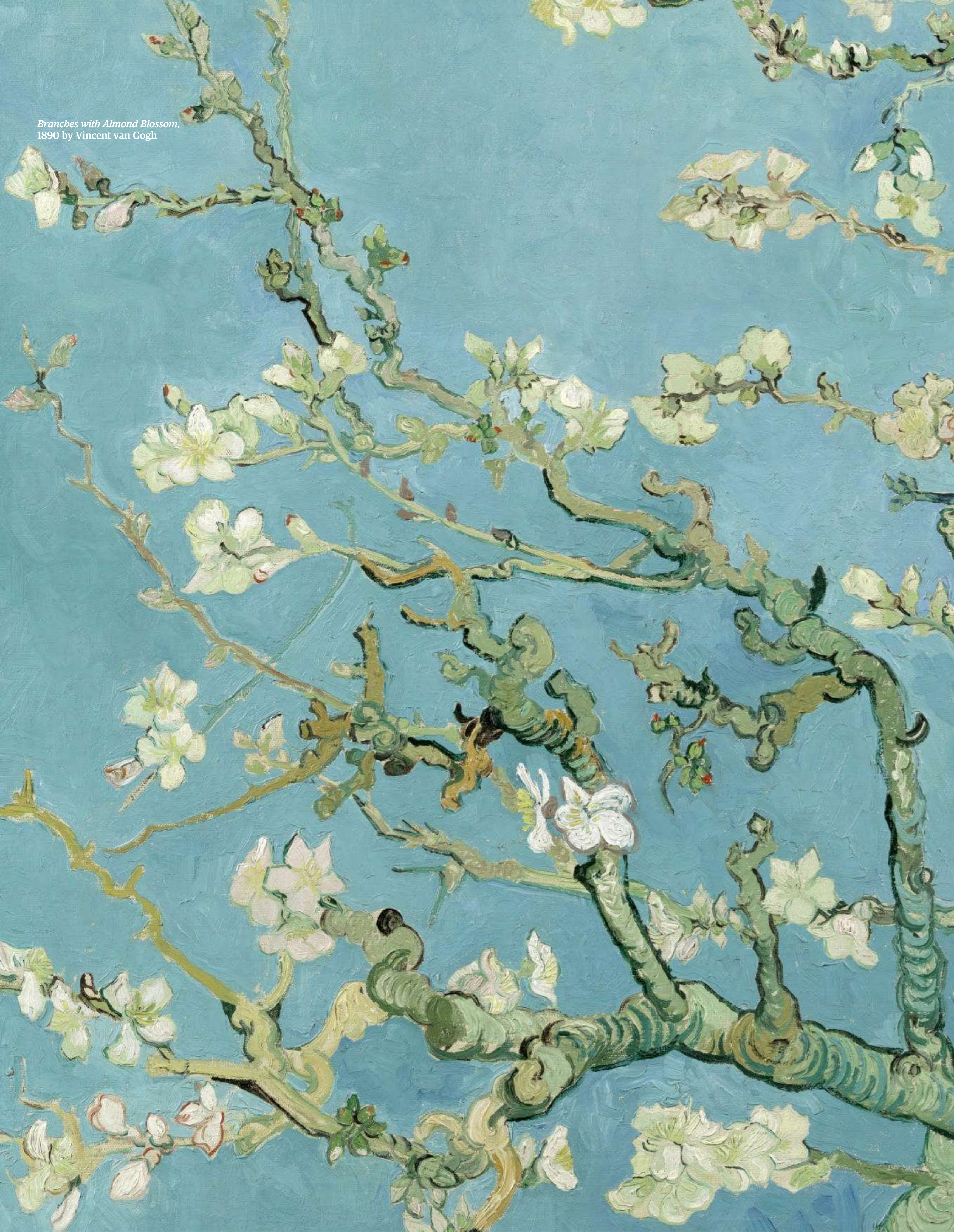
ALL ABOUT HISTORY

Digital Edition

FUTURE

FIRST EDITION

EXPLORE THE REMARKABLE STORY OF THE WORLD'S MOST PROFOUND MASTERPIECES



*Branches with Almond Blossom,*
1890 by Vincent van Gogh

# Welcome

When Vincent van Gogh – poor, destitute Vincent, who relied on an allowance from his brother to survive – prophesied about "the painter of the future" in a letter to his benevolent sibling, he couldn't have foreseen that he himself would fulfil that role. Months after his letter, Vincent sliced off his ear and found himself spiralling into a catastrophic mental breakdown, his artwork reviled by critics and shunned by decent society. Eighteen months later, on the cusp of success, Vincent died. In modern-day society, his art is some of the most recogniseable in the world, with its unique daubs of colour revealing the remarkable beauty of the everyday. But before Vincent, there had been many other artists whose works shocked – and later were celebrated by – the art world. In this brand-new bookazine, trace the incredible history of art, from the rivalry between Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, to the sordid life of blood-thirsty Caravaggio. Explore the legacy of the Renaissance on contemporary art, and find out how Dadaism rejected the status quo and shone a light on the absurdity of war.

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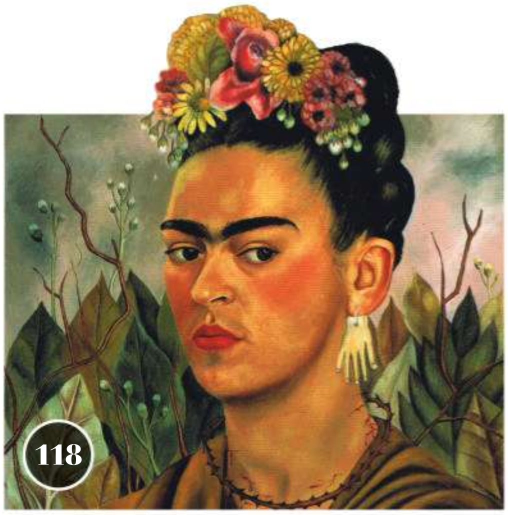

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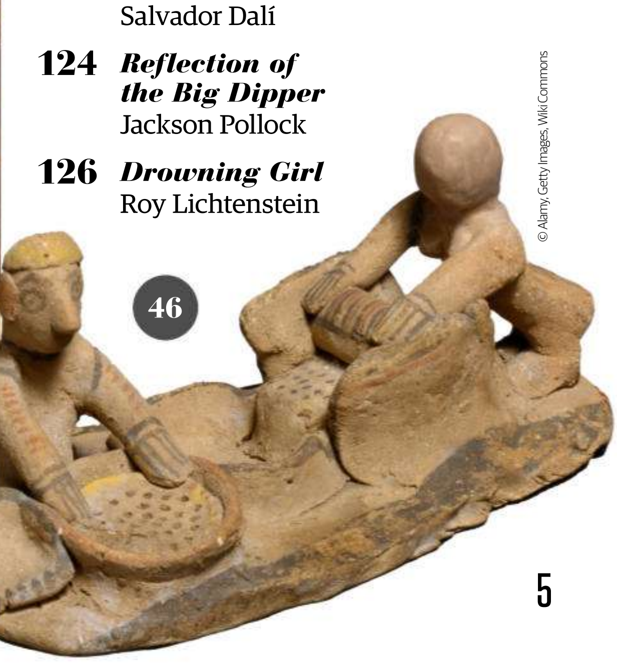

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# Tracing the history of Art

## From ancient cave paintings to Minimalism, human's desire to create has led to a rich tradition of constantly changing styles

**Written by Callum McKelvie**

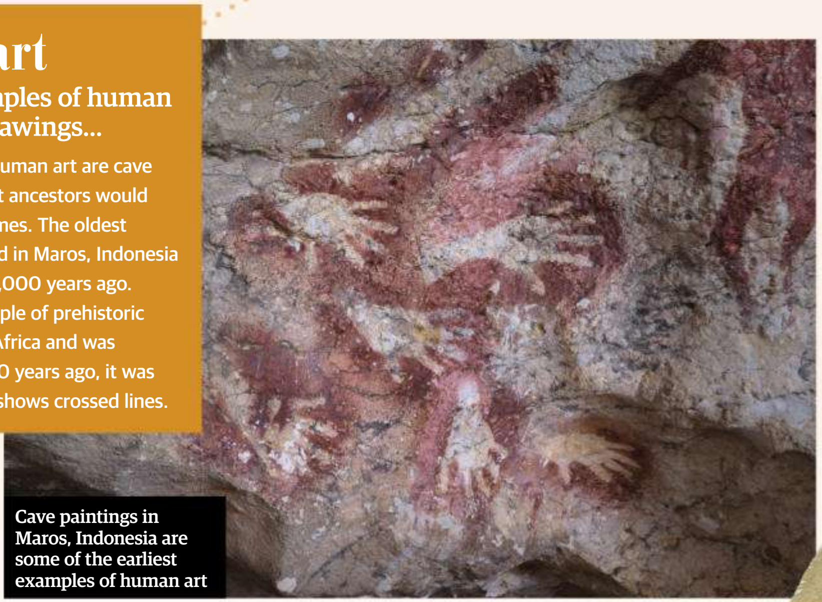
Since the dawn of time, humans have strove to create. From attempting to preserve a visual record of events, for example the Bayeux Tapestry produced in the wake of the Norman Conquest of England, to simply exploring the artist's own world view, such as the more recent work of Tracey Emin, over the centuries art has developed, its makers constantly seeking new methods and styles. Artists have looked to the past, present and even to the future for inspiration. But what were the key movements that helped change the nature of art? And how did they lead to the art world as we know it today?

c38,000 BCE - c12,000 BCE

## Ancient cave art

### The earliest known examples of human art are these primitive drawings...

Some of the earliest examples of human art are cave paintings, found where our ancient ancestors would have sheltered and made their homes. The oldest example of cave art was discovered in Maros, Indonesia in 2014 and dates from around 40,000 years ago. However, the earliest known example of prehistoric art in general actually dates from Africa and was discovered in 2018. Painted 73,000 years ago, it was discovered on a piece of rock and shows crossed lines.



Cave paintings in Maros, Indonesia are some of the earliest examples of human art

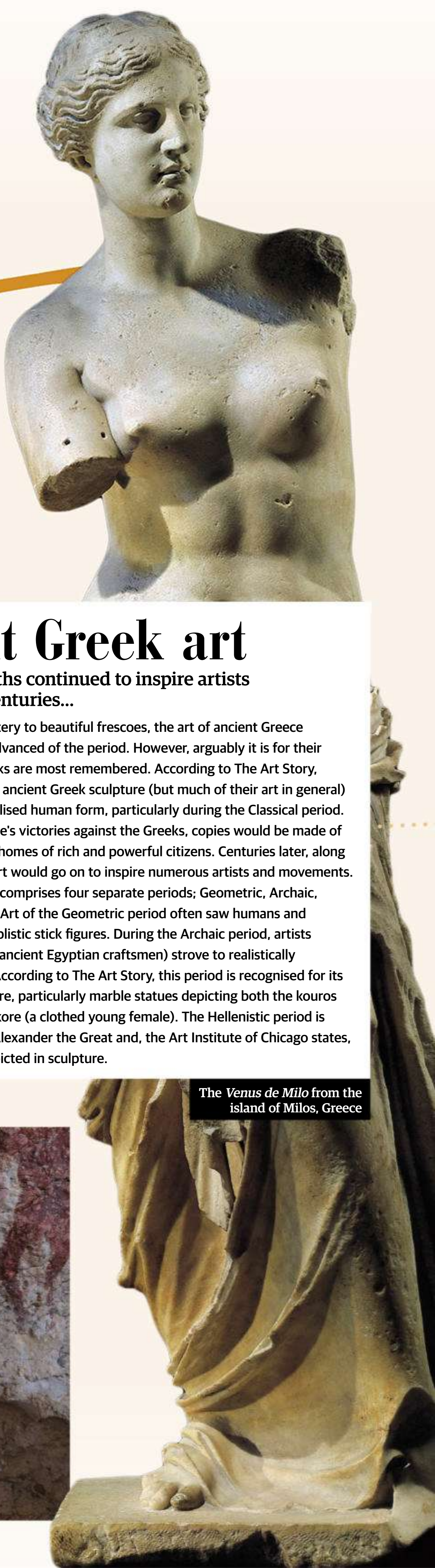
c1200 BCE - c600 CE

## Ancient Greek art

### Greek art and myths continued to inspire artists throughout the centuries...

From their exquisite pottery to beautiful frescoes, the art of ancient Greece was some of the most advanced of the period. However, arguably it is for their sculptures that the Greeks are most remembered. According to The Art Story, particularly important to ancient Greek sculpture (but much of their art in general) was showcasing the idealised human form, particularly during the Classical period. During the Roman Empire's victories against the Greeks, copies would be made of these sculptures for the homes of rich and powerful citizens. Centuries later, along with Roman art, Greek art would go on to inspire numerous artists and movements.

Historically, Greek art comprises four separate periods; Geometric, Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic. Art of the Geometric period often saw humans and animals depicted by simplistic stick figures. During the Archaic period, artists (inspired by the work of ancient Egyptian craftsmen) strove to realistically portray human figures. According to The Art Story, this period is recognised for its developments in sculpture, particularly marble statues depicting both the kouros (a young nude male) or kore (a clothed young female). The Hellenistic period is defined by the reign of Alexander the Great and, the Art Institute of Chicago states, saw mythical figures depicted in sculpture.



The *Venus de Milo* from the island of Milos, Greece

## Ancient Egyptian art

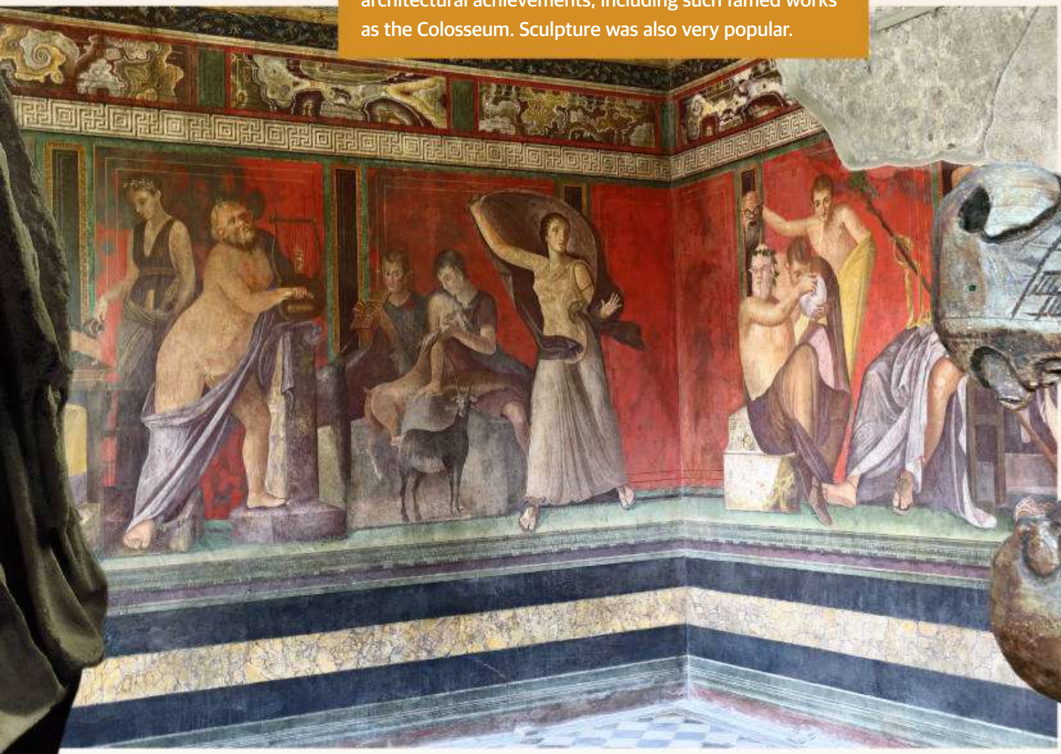
The ancient Egyptians are remembered for their funerary art and impressive architectural developments. Many of their techniques proved particularly influential, particularly on the artists and sculptors of Greece.

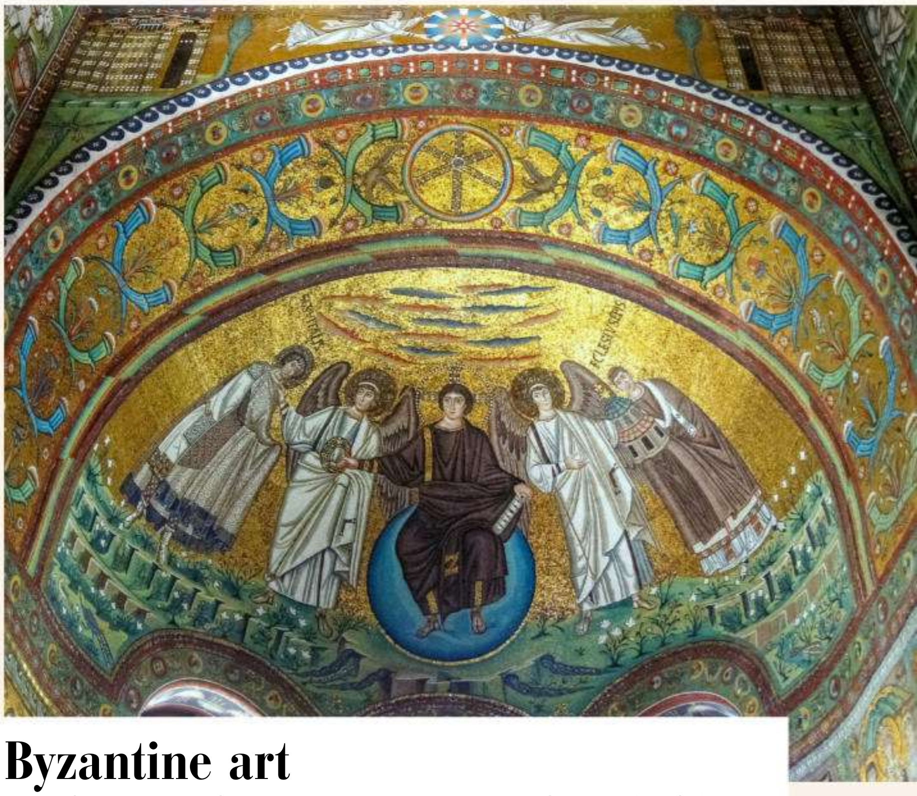
5000 BCE - 300 CE

509 BCE - 330 CE

## Ancient Roman art

Among numerous art forms, Rome is remembered for its architectural achievements, including such famed works as the Colosseum. Sculpture was also very popular.





## Byzantine art

### Out of the ashes of the Roman Empire, the craftspeople of the Byzantine Empire created exquisite religious themed works

Following the collapse of the Roman Empire, its Eastern side lived on as the Byzantine Empire, with the city of Constantinople at its heart. Much of Byzantine art was religious in nature, focusing on Orthodox-Christian figures such as Christ, the Virgin Mary and a variety of saints. According to the National Galleries of Scotland, during this period there was no delineation between craftspersons (such as carpenters) and artists.

c395 - c1453

780-1100

## Viking art

Viking artists excelled at different crafts, including metalwork and carving. There are six distinct styles, each named after the area in which archaeologists have discovered a famous example.

## Romanesque

This medieval architectural style earned its name from the fact it still maintained visible traces of Roman design. However, it also contained other influences, most notably Byzantine.

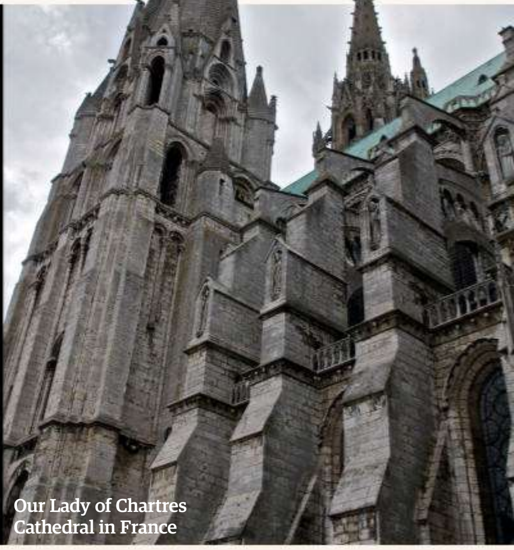
1075-1125

Mid-12th to 16th century

## Gothic

### This remarkable style was created to solve an architectural problem…

Developing from Romanesque art, Gothic art was mostly confined to architecture and examples can still be found on cathedrals and churches across Europe. The style is mainly characterised by pointed arches, created as a solution to developing vaulted ceilings. The term was coined by Giorgio Vasari who, according to the Metropolitan Museum, intended to reference the Gothic Nordic tribes, implying that the style was inherently 'debased'.



Our Lady of Chartres Cathedral in France

15th-16th century

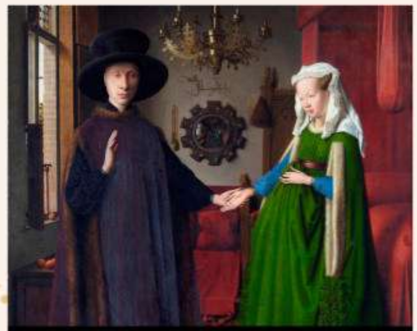
## Italian Renaissance

### In 15th century Italy, artists and philosophers pioneered new ways of looking at the world

The Italian Renaissance was a period of exciting developments across a range of areas, including science, philosophy and art. Prior to the Renaissance, a 'proto-Renaissance' occurred in the 13th and 14th centuries, which saw artists begin to discard the Gothic style. Central to ideas of the 15th century Renaissance, however, was the emerging philosophy of 'humanism'. This school of thought emphasised the study of Classical art and literature, accentuating the importance of man and his achievements in relation to the world.

Artists would have patrons, wealthy organisations, individuals or families who commissioned them to produce art. One powerful family was the Medici, who had ruled the city of Florence from the early 13th century. Artistically, a key development was the use of perspective, making the proportions of an object in an artwork closely mirror those in reality. This was not used exclusively in painting, however, and architect Filippo Brunelleschi's work with perspective ensured he became one of the key figures of Renaissance architecture. Religious subjects were still a focus of many works but artists were also commissioned to paint portraits of their patrons. Artists who flourished during the Italian Renaissance include Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, the former perhaps best remembered for his painting the *Mona Lisa* and the latter for his statue, *David*.

Michelangelo's *David*, one of the most famous examples of Renaissance art

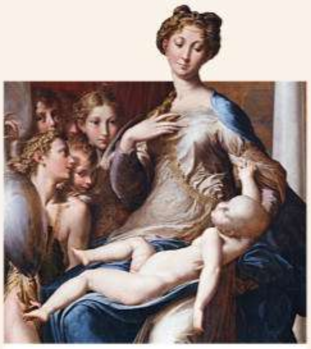


## Northern Renaissance

At the beginning of the 15th century, the Italian Renaissance's ideas reached Northern Europe. Here, Jan van Eyck popularised oil painting but much of the artwork produced still contained visible Gothic influences.

1430 - c1580

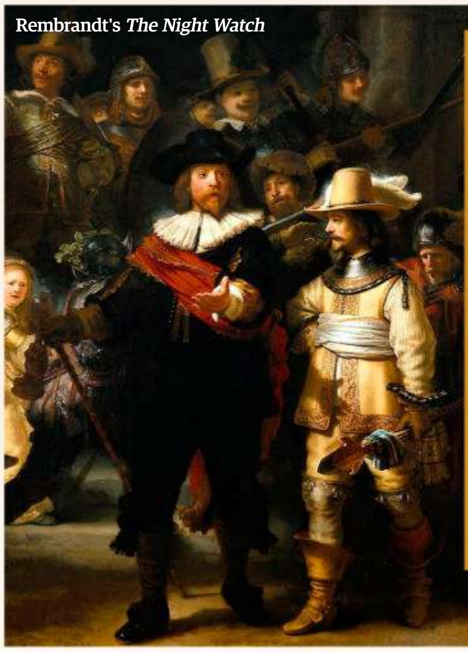
1520 - c1599



## Mannerism

Mannerism preached style above everything else. Despite still being naturalistic in principle, Mannerist works may emphasise a certain part of a figure's anatomy – for example Parmigianino's the *Madonna with the Long Neck*.

Rembrandt's *The Night Watch*

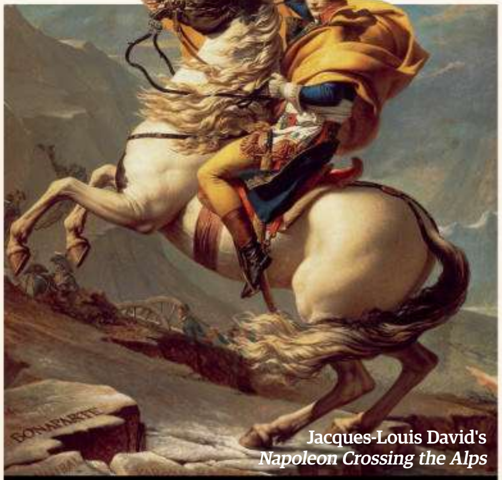


## Baroque

### This rich artistic style was meant to provoke an emotional response in the viewer

The Baroque style is defined by a sense of richness, deep colours and a feeling of spiritual wonder. The Baroque movement was partly born out of a desire by Italian artists to move away from the previous Mannerist and Renaissance styles. However, one of the Baroque's main patrons was the Catholic Church, who saw the movement as a means of spreading its spiritual message. Baroque art encompassed a number of crafts and even influenced theatrical design.

1600-1750



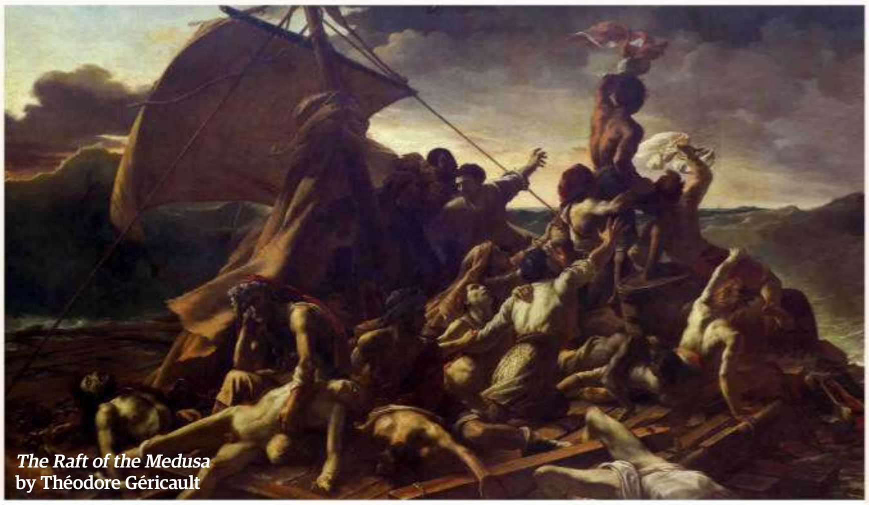
Jacques-Louis David's *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*

c1760 - c1840

## Neoclassicism

Inspired by a revived interest in ancient Greek and Roman culture, brought about by contemporary archaeological discoveries, Neoclassicism was a rejection of the jovial Rococo styles.

c1798-1837



*The Raft of the Medusa* by Théodore Géricault

## Romanticism

### This artistic movement sought to depict an individual's emotional state, over a realistic portrayal

According to the Metropolitan Museum, Romanticism; "emerged as a response to the disillusionment with the Enlightenment values of reason and order in the aftermath of the French Revolution in 1789". Romanticism as a movement was not confined simply to art – it also flourished in literature and poetry. The movement emphasised the individual over the collective and chaos over relative harmony. Nature, and the power of nature in particular, was a key focus of numerous Romantic works. According to the Metropolitan, artists evoked the earlier ideas of the sublime, first described in Edmund Burke's paper, 'Philosophical Enquiry' (1757). 'The storm' as a subject epitomised many of these beliefs and became a popular subject of romantic painters.

Key romantic painters include Francisco Goya, Turner and Constable. Goya in particular is considered one of the greatest Romantic painters. His work contains numerous fantasy elements, with his later works (known as 'the Black Paintings') notably dark in tone. Other paintings, such as Henry Fuseli's *The Nightmare*, also demonstrated the dark side of Romanticism. Fuseli's disturbing work is said to have been instrumental in the emerging literary genre of Gothic horror, with professor of English, Maryanne C Ward, believing it to have influenced Mary Shelley in the writing of *Frankenstein*.

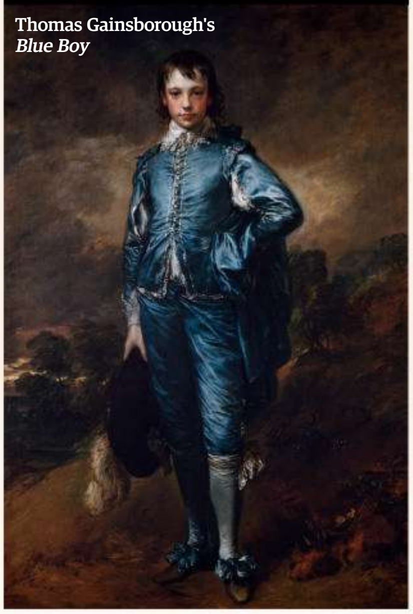
1740-70

## Rococo

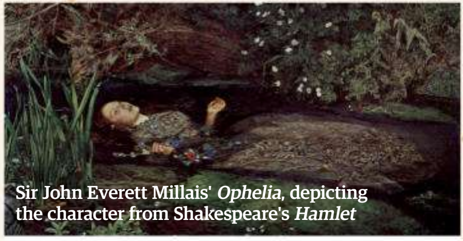
### Although often associated with design, Rococo also permeated into art

It was from the hands of artisans, not painters or sculptors, that Rococo's unique style was born. Originating in Paris, the Victoria and Albert Museum describes it as; "exceptionally ornamental and theatrical – a style without rules". Despite its origins, these principles quickly spread to other art forms. In painting, Rococo is defined by a distinctly jovial approach, with rich sensual colouring. The movement was brought to Britain, where it was employed by artists such as Thomas Gainsborough.

Thomas Gainsborough's *Blue Boy*



1848-53



Sir John Everett Millais' *Ophelia*, depicting the character from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

## The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

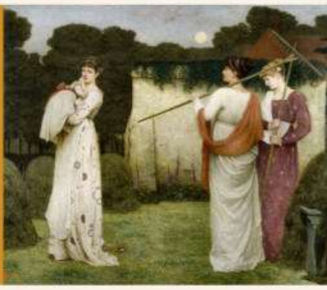
### These rebel painters looked to the past and rejected the teachings of the Royal Academy

This group of English painters was founded with the intention of returning to the styles of Italian art before the 15th century and sought to counter the influence of Sir Joshua Reynolds and the Royal Academy of Arts. In particular, they set themselves against the continued praising, and imitating, of the work of the painter Raphael – hence their name. However, many objected to the Brotherhood's work and their conscious decision to return to the styles of medieval paintings.

1860-1900

## Aestheticism

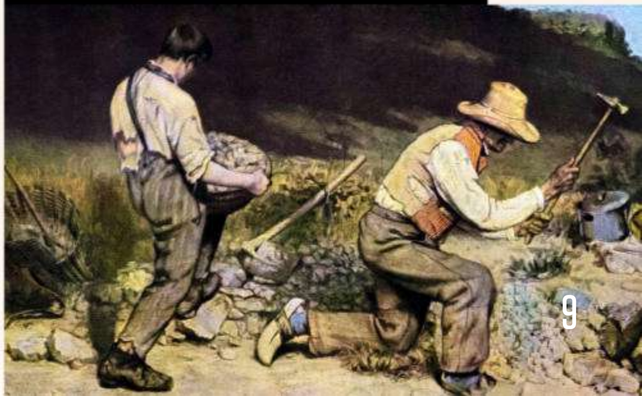
The principle of the Aesthetic movement was to focus on the visual above all else. According to the Victoria and Albert Museum, this meant creating "art that was beautiful rather than having a deeper meaning".

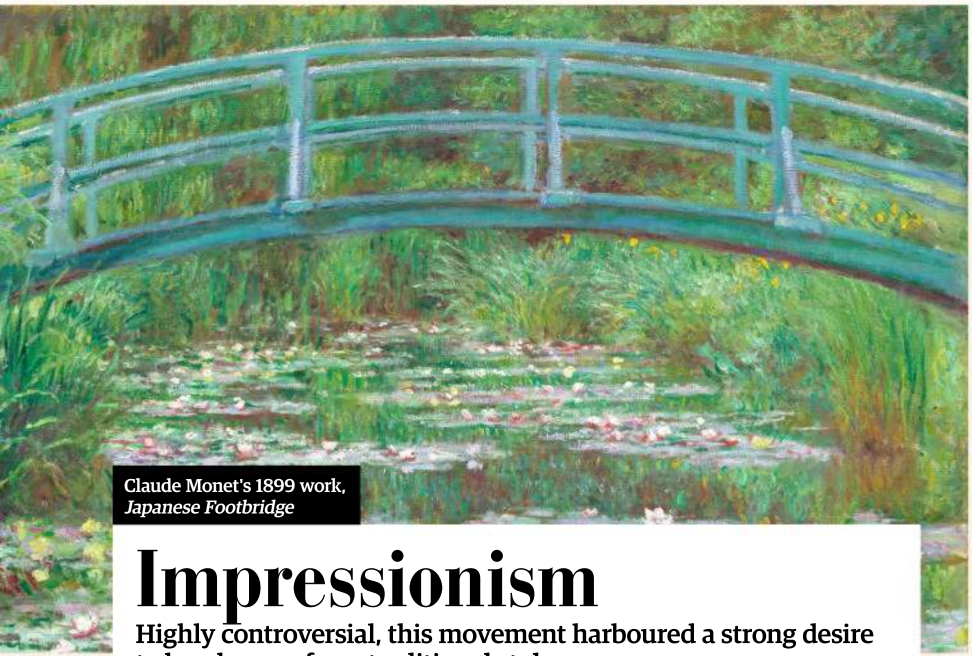


1860-90

## Realism

Realism strongly rejected the idealism shown in previous artistic movements, its members choosing instead to focus on the real world. One of the key figures of this movement was Gustave Courbet.





Claude Monet's 1899 work, *Japanese Footbridge*

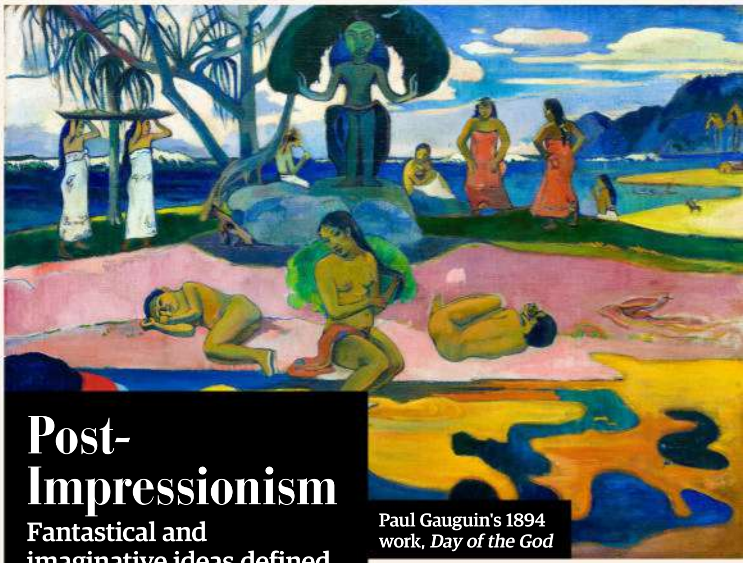
c1860 - c1886

# Impressionism

### Highly controversial, this movement harboured a strong desire to break away from traditional styles...

Emerging from the Realist movement, the Impressionist style used small brush strokes and a lack of detail to achieve the 'impression' of a person, place or object. Although often seen as one collective movement, they were actually a group of individual artists who worked along similar lines – though they did exhibit together. As opposed to other movements, which looked back towards antiquity, the Impressionists chose modern subjects and settings. In particular, Paris (at the time in the early years of the Belle Époque) proved a popular subject for the Impressionist painters.

At the heart of Impressionism was a desire to move away from traditional painting methods, as well as the aristocracy of the contemporary art world. Most art shows were held under the remit of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, but the Impressionists' first exhibition was held a mere two weeks before that organisation's annual salon. The movement took its name from one of Claude Monet's works; *Impression, Sunrise* (1872) when critic Louis Leroy stated that; "A preliminary drawing for a wallpaper pattern is more finished than this seascape". As Leroy's comment suggests, the work of the Impressionists was widely derided, with another declaring they "declared war on beauty".



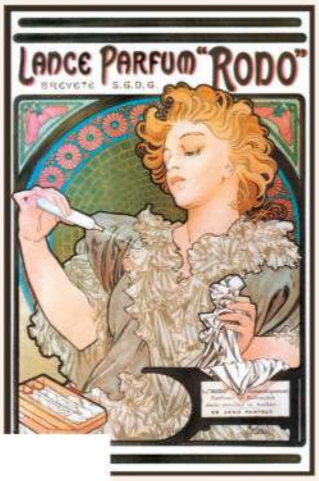
Paul Gauguin's 1894 work, *Day of the God*

c1886 - c1905

# Post-Impressionism

### Fantastical and imaginative ideas defined Post-Impressionist works

In 1886, the Impressionists held their last exhibition together. The years after this were characterised by the innovations of a number of new artists, including Vincent van Gogh or Georges Seurat. Their works purposefully broke the rules of the earlier movement. For example, according to the Tate, artist Paul Gauguin rejected the concept of painting from nature, instead depicting fantastical concepts, such as a god walking among humans in his 1894 work, *Day of the God*.



1890-1914

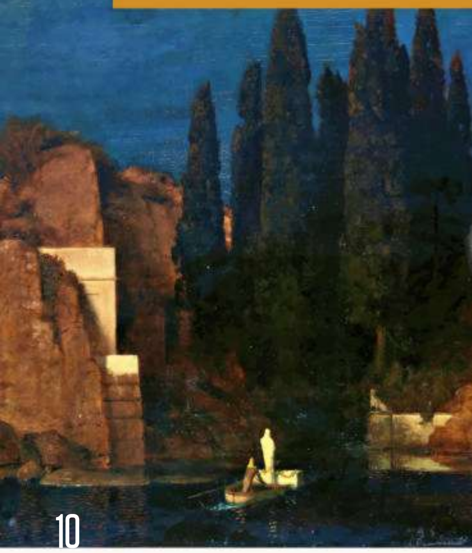
## Art Nouveau

The French term 'Nouveau' means 'New' and so this movement quite literally concerned itself with creating 'New Art'. The movement would receive a revival during the 1960s.

1880-1910

## Symbolism

Developing initially as a literary movement, Symbolists sought to capture a concept or the feelings associated with that concept, rather than realistically portray the subject itself.



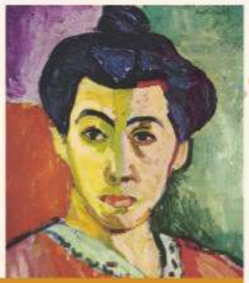
William Morris, credited as being one of the originators of the Art and Crafts movement

c1880-1910

# The Arts and Crafts movement

### This movement campaigned against the lack of quality in contemporary household items

In the late 18th century, the Arts and Crafts movement was founded in retaliation to growing industrialisation and emphasis on machine production. Its leaders championed traditional crafting methods, seeking a return to handmade objects. A key figure was William Morris, who according to the Victoria and Albert Museum, was involved with the movement between 1891 and his death in 1896. The ideas spread globally, with a separate movement beginning in America.



1905-10

## Fauvism

Fauvism is defined by its use of strong colours and harsh brush strokes. Henri Matisse and André Derain first experimented with these techniques before introducing them to the Parisian art scene.

1905-33

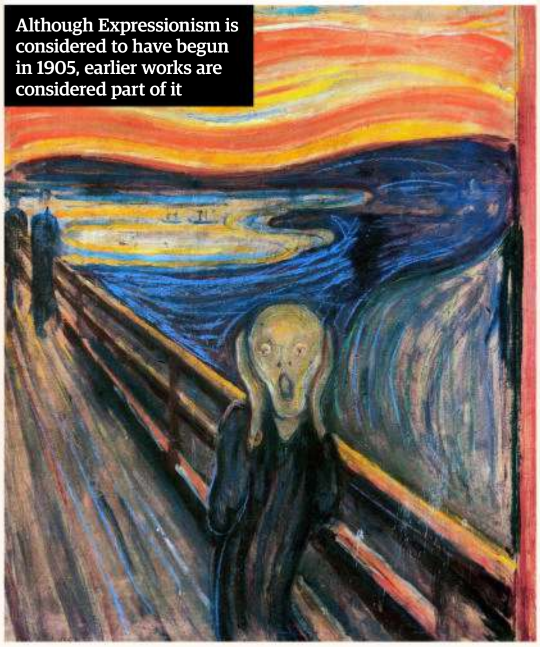
# Expressionism

### Originating in Germany, Expressionist art twisted the subject to express the emotions of the artist

Expressionism is thought to have had its origins in the activities of a group of young aspiring German artists, known as 'The Bridge'. One of the founders, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, and his contemporaries, sought to create their artworks from their own individual perspective, 'expressing' their emotions in the work itself. However, the foundations of these ideas can be traced to the accomplishments of earlier artists, such as Vincent van Gogh and Edvard Munch.

Expressionism continued throughout the early 20th century and flourished following the end of World War I, where its intense visual styles helped many to express the trauma of that cataclysmic event. Unlike other artistic movements that faded out with time, German Expressionism was wiped out when the Nazi party took power in 1933 and banned all forms of art that they viewed as 'degenerative'.

But Expressionism as a movement was not limited solely to the fine arts. It is thought to have originated in poetry and it also found its way into other art forms, such as sculpture and cinema, with films such as Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*. This is perhaps the most obvious example, as Hermann Warm, Walter Reimann and Walter Röhrig's set design introduced Expressionism into the film's stylised set design.



Although Expressionism is considered to have begun in 1905, earlier works are considered part of it

1907-15

## Cubism

Introduced by Pablo Picasso, according to the Tate, Cubist artists; "aimed to show different viewpoints at the same time and within the same space and so suggest their three dimensional form".

Umberto Boccioni's *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*

1909-14

## Futurism

### Fantastical and imaginative ideas defined Post-Impressionist works

Futurist art celebrated the beauty of the machine. Founded by the Italian poet and editor, Tommaso Marinetti, he penned a manifesto explaining his ideas in 1909 and extolled what he saw as the vitality of the modern world. The movement was interrupted by the outbreak of World War I, but a second generation of Futurists appeared following its end. Unfortunately Marinetti later became a dedicated fascist and follower of the dictator Mussolini, merging his Futurist ideas with his new fascistic beliefs.

1914-20

## Vorticism

Vorticism was an artistic movement founded by Wyndham Lewis that glorified the modern age but also violence and aggression. As with Futurism, its founders later had links to various fascist movements.

1915-40

## Constructivism

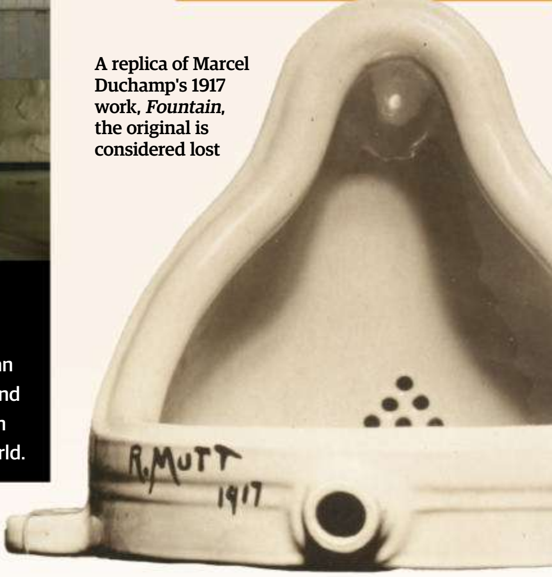
Influenced by the earlier Cubist movement, Constructivism was a Russian movement founded by Vladimir Tatlin and Alexander Rodchenko with the intention of celebrating the modern industrial world.

1916 - mid-1920s

## Dada

### This rebellious movement rejected traditional art and the values associated with it

Following the end of World War I, Dadaism's founders intended to, according to the Tate, "destroy traditional values in art and create new art to replace the old". Like other movements during this period, Dadaism encompassed many forms, from painting to poetry. Founded by writer Hugo Ball, the movement rejected nationalism, materialism and other values. Dadaism is widely seen as forming the basis for the later Surrealist movement.



A replica of Marcel Duchamp's 1917 work, *Fountain*, the original is considered lost

c1918 - c1937

## Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance saw a flourishing of work by African-American artists and creators. These works were inspired by the artist's African heritage and contemporary issues facing African-Americans.

1919-39

## Art Deco

### Many Art Deco buildings can still be found throughout the world

Beginning in Paris, the Art Deco movement is distinguishable by its geometric designs. According to the New York Public Library, the movement's styles began to be exported following a government exposition in 1925. Most Art Deco works are commercial posters or functional objects, as the artists believed in creating items that had a use and purpose. Art Deco architecture was particularly popular and buildings can be found across the world to this day.

The Chrysler building is one of the most famous Art Deco structures in the world

1919-33

## Bauhaus

### This groundbreaking school focused on unifying art with design, until they were shut down by the Nazis

Bauhaus was the name of an art school popular during the Weimar Republic in Germany, following the end of World War I. The school was centred on the belief that art and design should be unified. According to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, students were inducted via a course run by contemporary fine artists. Following this, they would then apply what they had learnt to practical skills, such as metal work. The Nazi Party closed the school in 1933.

The Bauhaus's second home at Dessau, opened in 1926

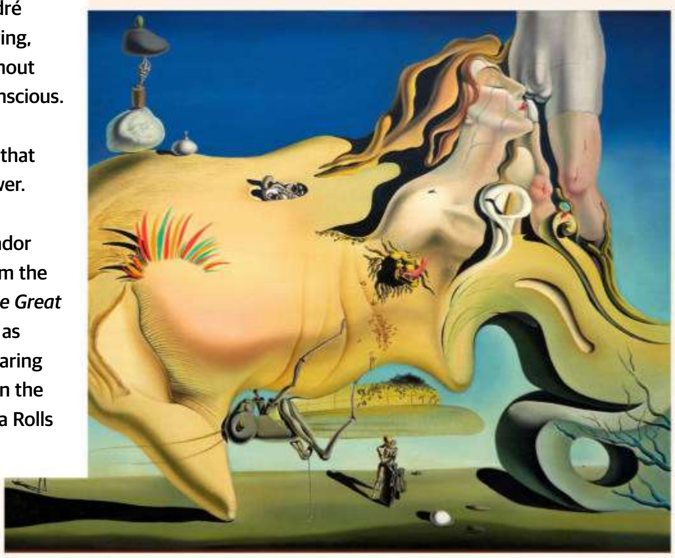
1924-66

## Surrealism

### Filled with hallucinogenic images, Surrealist works sought to tap into the inner workings of the unconscious mind

In 1924, the poet André Breton put forward a remarkable idea; what if the unconscious mind was where an individual's true artistic potential lay? To this end he founded the Surrealist movement. According to the Tate, "The movement's artists find magic and strange beauty in the unexpected and the uncanny, the disregarded and the unconventional". Many Surrealist artists, such as André Masson, utilised a process known as automatic drawing, by which the artist drew directly onto the paper without planning beforehand, hoping to tap into their subconscious.

But as the movement grew, other artists forwent such methods and instead created dreamlike pieces that attempted to appeal to the subconscious of the viewer. Without doubt the most famous, or infamous, figure associated with Surrealism is the Spanish artist Salvador Dalí. His paintings seemed to desire controversy, from the bizarre imagery of melting clocks to titles such as *The Great Masturbator* (1929). The artist also fashioned his life as something of a Surrealist work in its own right, appearing on talk shows with an anteater, referring to himself in the third person and once driving from Spain to Paris in a Rolls Royce Phantom II filled with cauliflowers.



c1940s-1960s

## Abstract Expressionism

Inspired by the Surrealist notion of painting directly from the unconscious mind, with minimal planning, Abstract Expressionist works focused on creating impulsive art.

1954-72

## Gutai

The Gutai art movement was a Japanese group of Avant-Garde artists who revolutionised their national art scene by incorporating performance into their artwork.

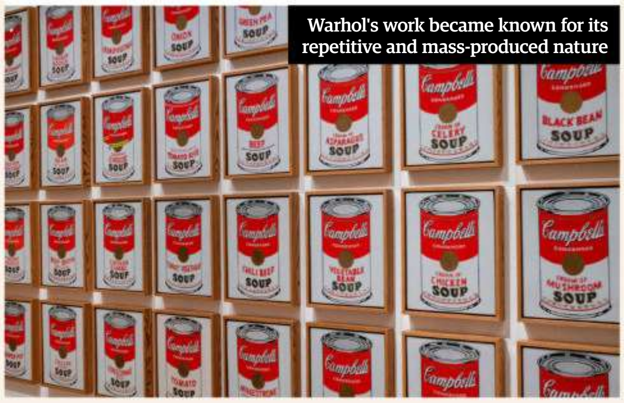
Late 1950s - c1970s

# Pop Art

### This transgressive new movement took inspiration from Hollywood movies, comic books and consumer culture

Whereas previous artistic movements drew from art history, Pop Art earned its name from the artist's obsession with contemporary popular culture. Instead of drawing inspiration from within the art community, they looked towards mainstream cinema, comic books and consumer culture. According to The Art Story, the movement may have had its origins in Britain in 1952, when a group of artists known as 'the Independent Group' openly discussed pop culture's place in the art world. However, many of the most famous artists of the movement came from New York at the end of the decade and by the 1960s, artists such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and James Rosenquist dominated the art world. The subject of Pop Art was varied and included everything from Claes Oldenburg's sculptures of mundane everyday objects, such as *Clothespin*, to Andy Warhol's vibrant portraits of Marilyn Monroe.

Warhol in particular emerged as the most famous figure from the Pop Art movement. According to The Museum of Modern Art, the name of his art studio, The Factory, referenced the fact that his artworks were mass-produced and often repetitive. These were key facets of Pop Art, connecting them to mass production and disposability of consumer culture. Emerging alongside Pop Art were other related movements, such as Nouveau Realism.


Warhol's work became known for its repetitive and mass-produced nature

Donald Judd's evocative cube art, located in the grounds of the Chinati Foundation in Texas

Late 1950s to 1970s

# Minimalism

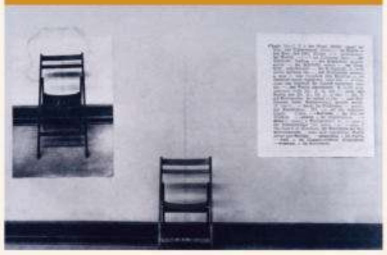
### Foregoing traditional subjects, Minimalism challenged the viewer to consider only the art itself

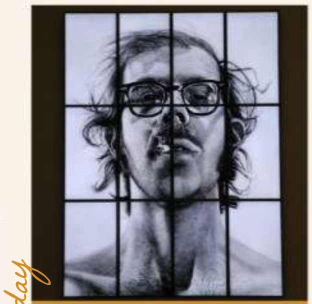
Beginning in 1950s and 1960s New York, Minimalism was an aesthetic crafted by a number of artists who, according to *Artland Magazine*, sought to break away from the traditions of Abstract Expressionism. Rather than use ordinary subjects or Expressionistic techniques to show meaning, Minimalist works challenge the viewer to consider only the artwork itself. Many works are defined by their use of geometric shapes. Key figures include sculptors Robert Morris and Donald Judd.

Mid-1960s-1970s

# Conceptualism

For Conceptual artists, the ideas behind their creations were more important that what they actually produced. A key artist was Joseph Kosuth, with works such as *One and Three Chairs*.





1960s-today

# Photorealism movement

As the name suggests, Photorealist art was based heavily on photographs. They sought to portray everyday life and included mundane events, for example Ralph Goings' *McDonalds Pickup*.

A more recent piece of Banksy artwork, dating from March 2024

1960s-today

# Street Art

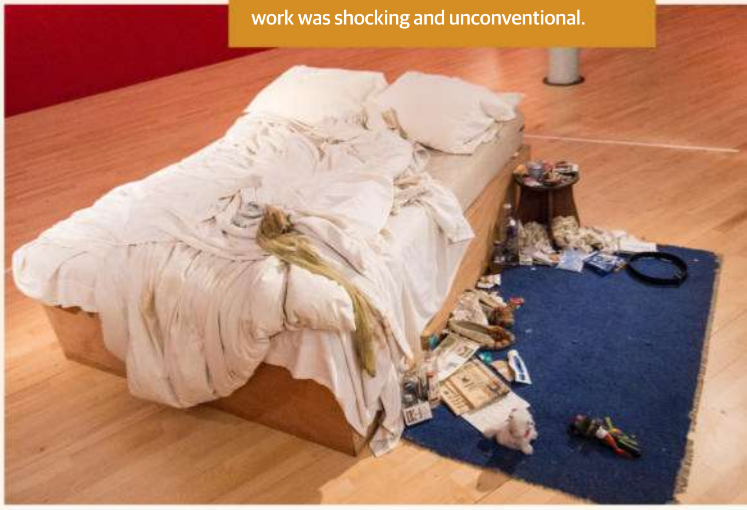
### From its origins in 1960s graffiti, to works by Banksy – Street Art shows no signs of going away

Enter any major city in the world and chances are you'll find walls covered with innovative and decorative graffiti. In 1960s New York, it was initially condemned, with Greek-American teenager 'TAKI 183' becoming notorious for spraying his name over the city. Over the decades, numerous artists began creating increasingly innovative works. One of the key street artists is the enigmatic British creator, Banksy, whose politically charged works continue to pop up on walls across the UK.

1988

# Young British Artists

This group of artists became synonymous with one another when their work was exhibited together in 1988. Featuring names such as Tracey Emin and Damien Hirst, their work was shocking and unconventional.



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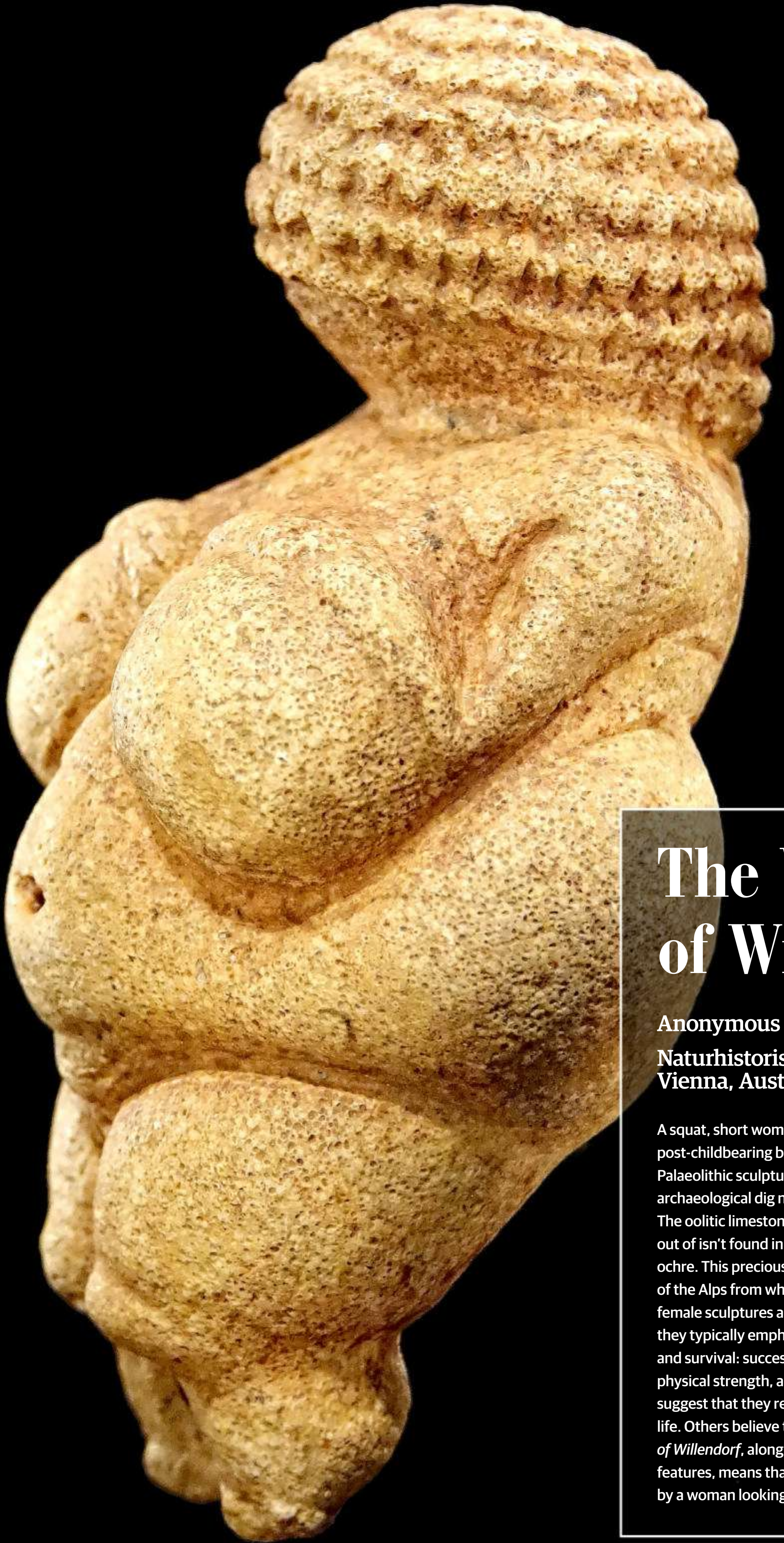

# The Venus of Willendorf

**Anonymous • c 25,000 BCE**

**Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria**

A squat, short woman with pendulous breasts, a post-childbearing belly and thick, strong hips, this Palaeolithic sculpture was found by a workman on an archaeological dig near Willendorf, Austria, in 1908. The oolitic limestone she's lovingly, observantly carved out of isn't found in the local area, and is tinted with red ochre. This precious object came from the other side of the Alps from where it was found. Prehistoric nude female sculptures are referred to as Venuses because they typically emphasise female attributes of fertility and survival: successful pregnancy and breastfeeding, physical strength, and high fat stores. Some researchers suggest that they represent goddesses of earth and life. Others believe that the perspective on the *Venus of Willendorf*, along with the lack of emphasis on facial features, means that it is possibly a self-portrait, carved by a woman looking down at her own body.

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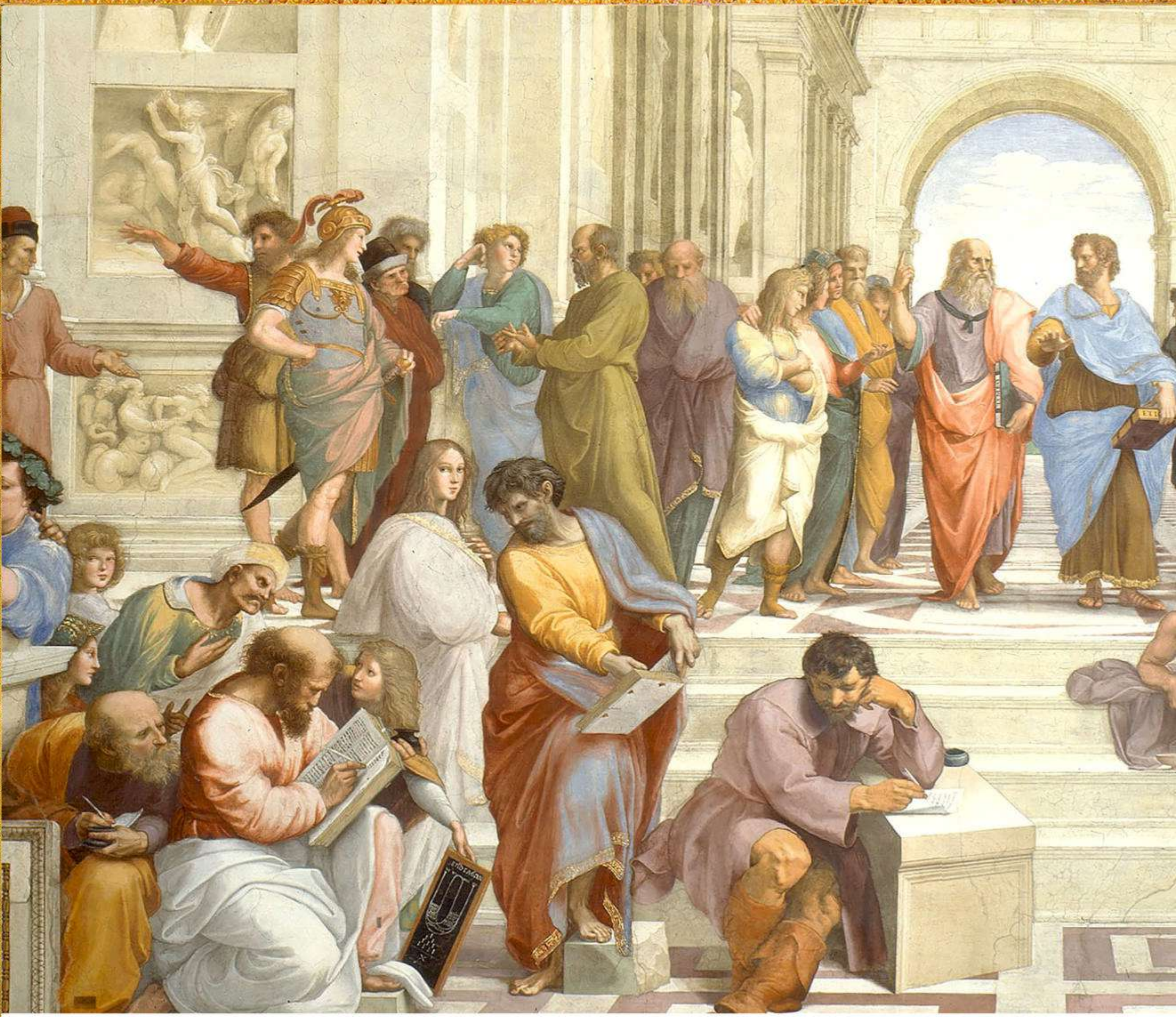
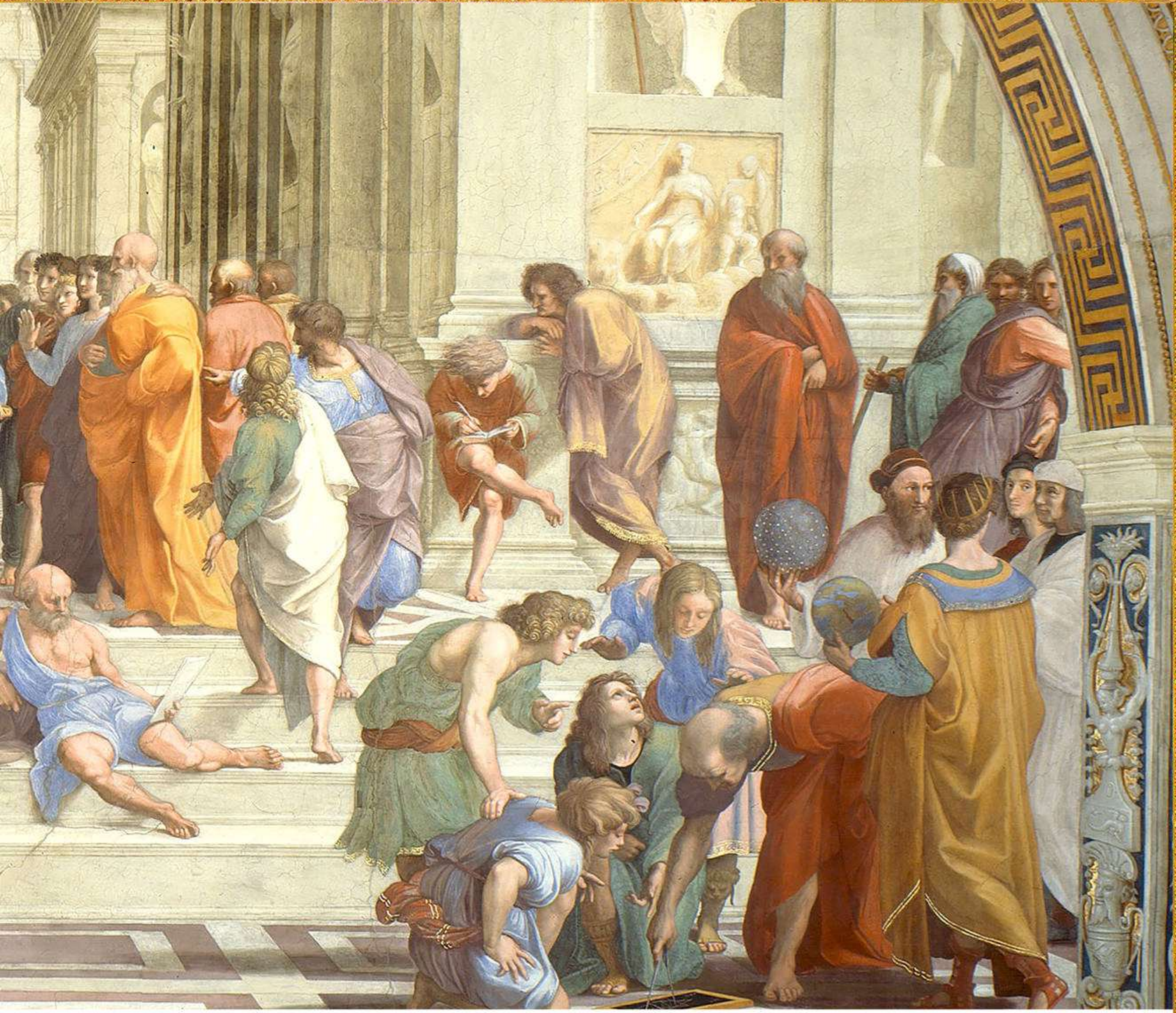


# The Privilege OF PAINTING

**The history of art seems dominated by white middle-class men. How and why is that the case?**

Written by April Madden



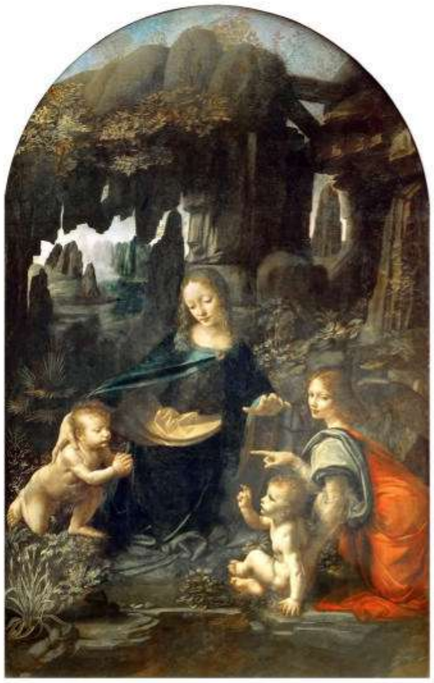
**ABOVE** In *The School of Athens*, Raphael has hidden himself and contemporaries Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo among the great men of antiquity that the Renaissance artists were emulating

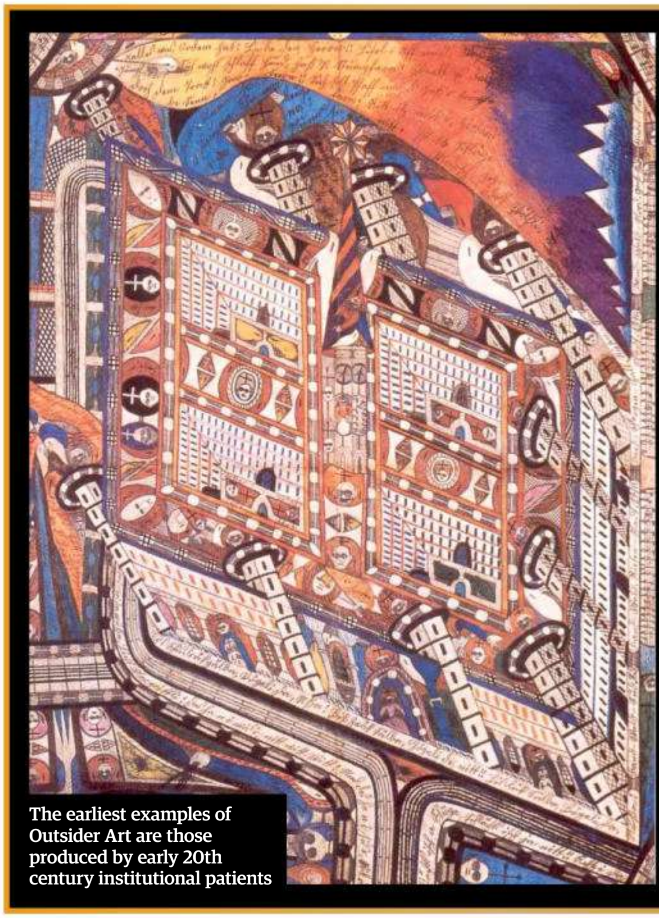
Walk into any of the world's great historical galleries, and you'll see one group of artists represented more than any other. Today curators work hard to bring diverse representation into their spaces, but for centuries the art establishment was the domain of, and dominated by, white Western men. Sometimes this was even to the exclusion of those who are considered the most privileged of this group today – turns out white male American artists have experienced being sidelined as poor relations to the pan-European painters who had historically carried on the legacy of the Old Masters. For centuries the art establishment believed that it was only in the Old World, in the lands that had been touched by the glory of the Renaissance, that the true spirit of elevated creativity could really flourish – and even then, only in the gifted hands of the chosen few. The priesthood of oil and canvas was predominantly a male one.

The Western canon of art history (so called because it centres on Western art) presupposes a set of conditions that were largely codified in the 18th century. This self-described Age of Enlightenment saw itself as inheriting the mantle of ancient Greece and Rome – not the primitive, bloody crucible of antiquity's reality but an idealised, orderly utopia that spawned the classical philosophers, mathematicians, poets and artists. Centuries later, after long and confusing Dark Ages, the polymaths of the Renaissance rediscovered this ancient knowledge, and the Western world experienced a literal intellectual rebirth, as classical techniques were unleashed once more into a Europe that had been fraught with the emotive Gothic style that had exemplified the Middle Ages. In the 18th century, spearheaded by the German archaeologist and art historian, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, this was the narrative that neatly explained all of art history.

Winckelmann is often referred to as the father of art history. He was the first to theorise and demonstrate that all civilisations had periods of rise, maturity and fall, which could be seen through their art and cultural artefacts, and the first to explain how art and objects could reveal historical nuances about how a society thought, felt and behaved. He used art history to add colour, scent and flavour to the aridity of chronological history, and his work went on to influence not only other budding art historians but also writers, artists – he was a huge influence on the Neoclassical art of the 18th century – and philosophers. To many, Winckelmann's theories felt like they made perfect sense.

The problem is, Winckelmann allowed his own tastes to guide his narrative. He elevated ancient Greek art over that of other ancient civilisations. Because he loved classical art so much, he built up the idea of the Renaissance as an archaeological rediscovery of classical art techniques even further, promulgating the idea that classical art is the 'best' – the most aesthetically pleasing and the most technically accomplished – because it is the most realistic. He claimed that the purpose of art is the creation of beauty, and that artistic license is permissible in realistic subjects in order to create visual harmony. Art, said Winckelmann, should imitate but not copy. It should be the thing it's representing, only better. This diktat influenced the Western canon for centuries, but Winckelmann was thinking in particular of smoothing out or accentuating muscles and veins in sculptures of heroic male nudes. The German art historian was the closest thing to openly gay the 18th century had, and he made no secret of his erotic admiration for classical male nudes, or his all-consuming crush on Frederick the Great of Prussia.





The earliest examples of Outsider Art are those produced by early 20th century institutional patients

## Outsider Art

Art that falls outside of the traditional pipeline of the Western canon – education, exhibition, recognition – is known as Outsider Art. It's distinct from folk art, which is often produced for decorative purposes, but can intersect with it. Like folk art it's often produced by people from marginalised groups – the Roses and Castles style is a distinctive aesthetic with its roots in British Romanichal culture – but Outsider Art is often seen as pursuing the fine-art ideal of creating "art for art's sake" rather than as a purely decorative object.

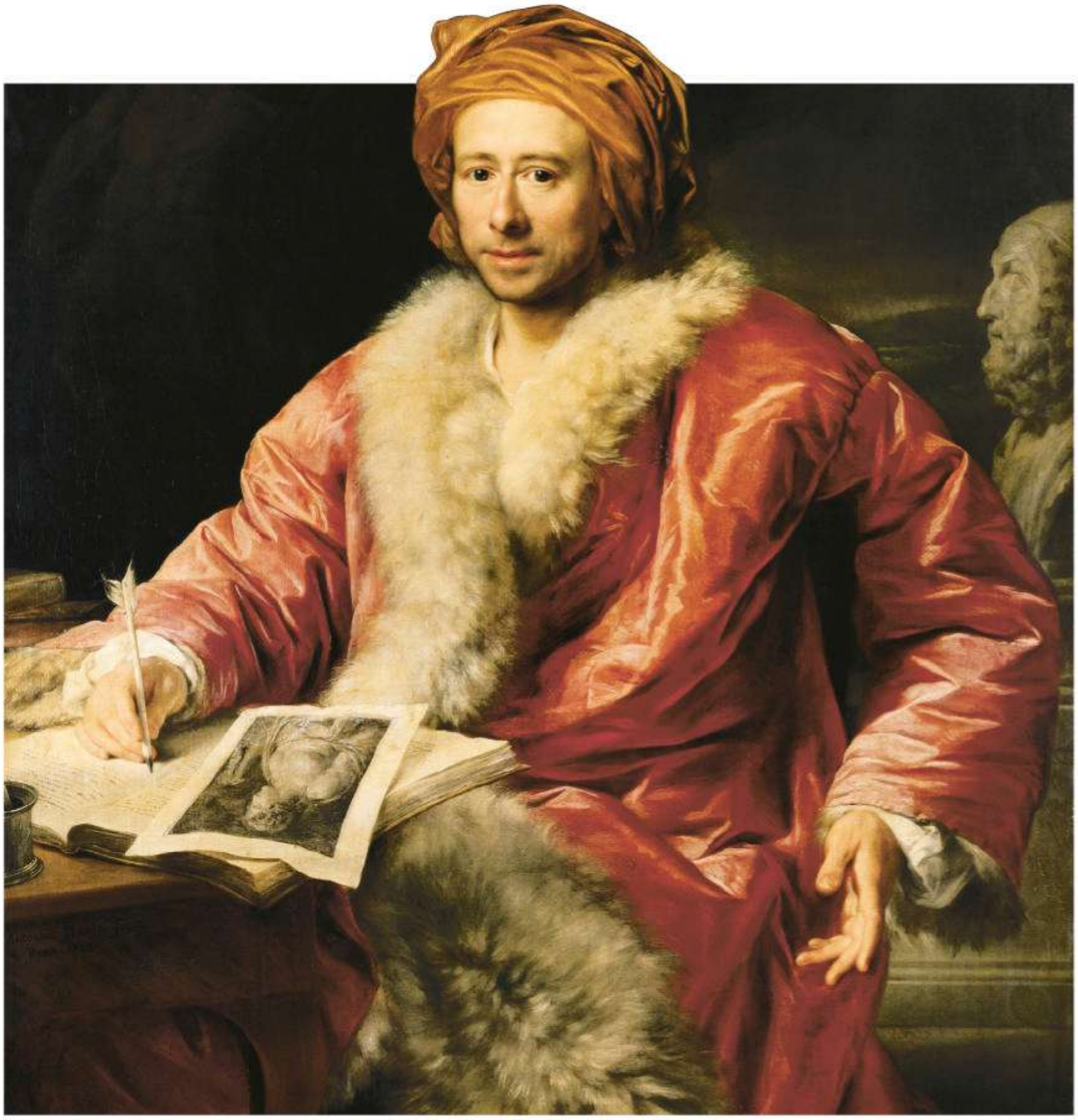
The Blue Rider group of early 20th century Expressionists became interested in folk art (which they called peasant art), as well as children's art and that of the institutionalised mentally ill, but their tentative research was curtailed by WWI. In the 1940s, French artist Jean Dubuffet became influenced by their ideas and began collecting what he called Art Brut – raw or rough art – saying that art that was created solely because of creative impulses as opposed to that which was made for pay or recognition was much more pure and authentic. Today, Outsider Art is particularly prevalent in the postcolonial New World (particularly the US, Canada and Australia), where it often intersects with Indigenous art, countercultural ideals, marginalisation and subcultures.

**ABOVE LEFT** The Roman Catholic art of the Renaissance was a solely male domain due to medieval Christian attitudes to women

**ABOVE** Winckelmann idolised classical sculptures of male nudes, and this resulted in him declaring ancient Greek art as being the most important and beautiful

**ABOVE RIGHT** Turner Prize-winning painter, Chris Ofili, used potent and controversial symbols of his African heritage – like elephant dung – in his critically acclaimed work

**RIGHT** Jean-Michel Basquiat's proximity to the street subcultures of the 1980s made his outsider status a lure for art buyers looking for something transgressive



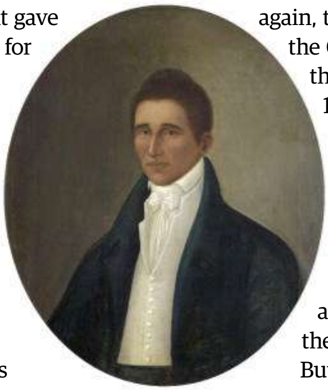
## "Renaissance Italy's artistic landscape was dominated by the Catholic Church"

**ABOVE** Johann Joachim Winckelmann may have been the father of art history, but he allowed his personal preferences for classical art to influence his historical writing

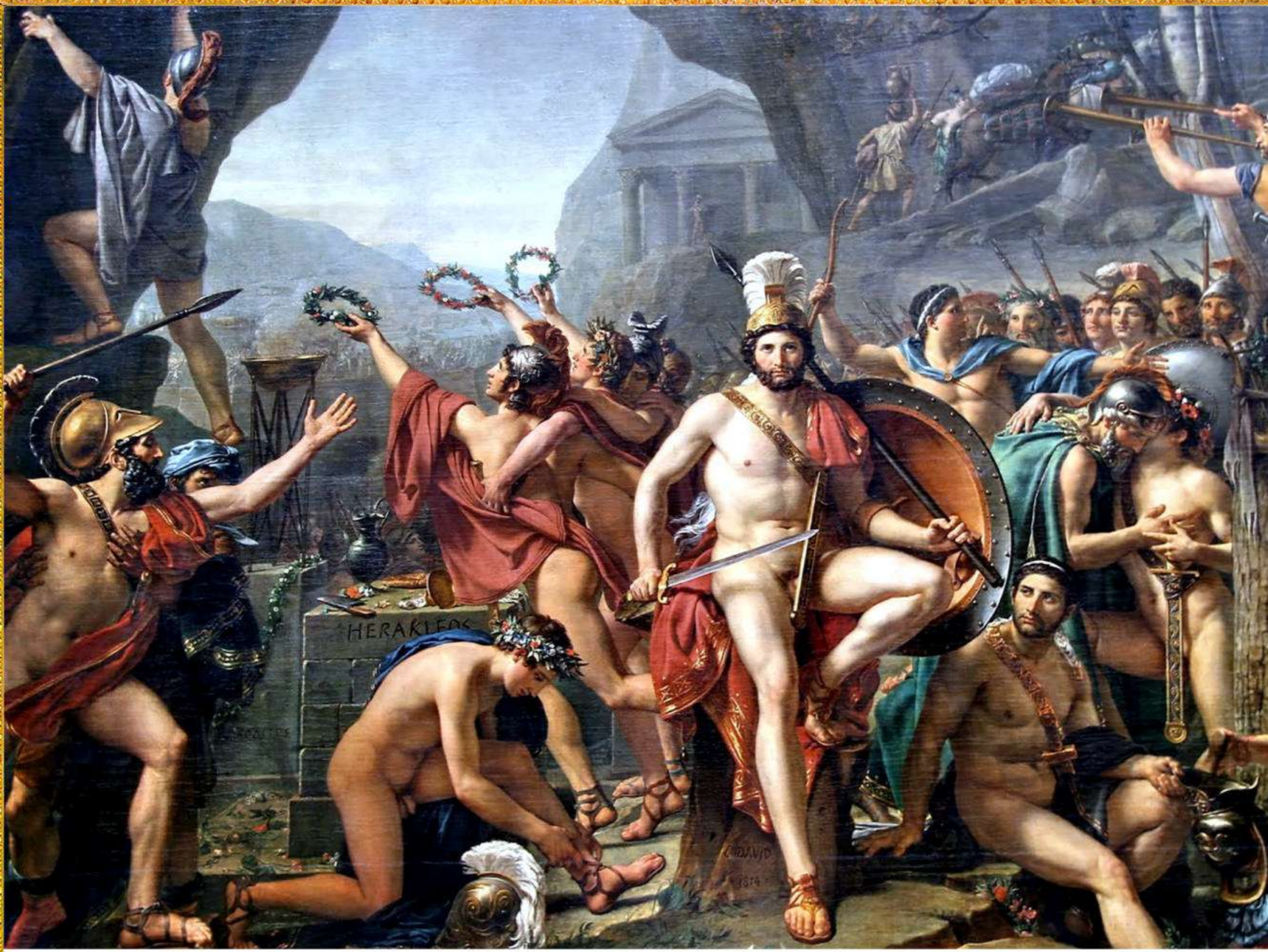
**RIGHT** African-American painter Joshua Johnson was the son of a Black slave. His father had to purchase him from the farmer who owned his mother and in order to officially free him

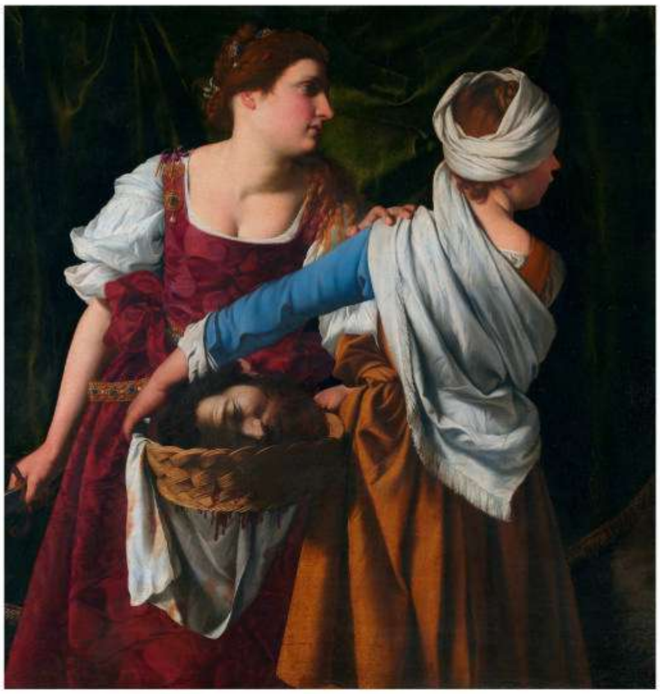
His admiration for ancient Greek society was in part due to its acceptance of homosexual relationships.

The Renaissance was what gave Winckelmann his precedent for centring his beloved ancient Greece as the heart of European culture, in what British academic Eliza Butler called "the tyranny of Greece over Germany" in her 1935 book of the same name. The book was controversial throughout Europe and was banned by Hitler's government for its accusation that the regime intended to blanket Europe with a homogenous Nazi-classicist aesthetic, but it asked a very valid question: why did northern European philosophers and cultural theorists of the Enlightenment era fixate on ancient Greece when it held no historical connection to their homelands? The answer was, again, the Renaissance. In Italy the Greek and Roman artefacts that were unearthed in the 15th and 16th centuries did have a direct historical connection to the artists who were influenced by them: Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and their compatriots were living and working at the centre of the old Roman Empire.



But there was another, newer empire in Rome that directly affected who could be an artist, and how. Renaissance Italy's artistic landscape was dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. Wealthy and powerful after centuries of

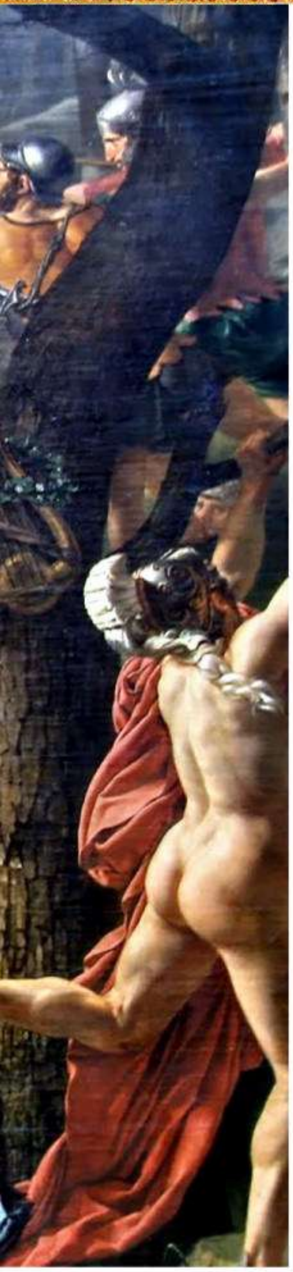




"As a male priesthood, they couldn't have women artists"

feeding on medieval tithes, it was the nearest thing the non-unified Italy – then a region made up of tiny kingdoms, principalities and duchies – had to a central government. The rediscovery of classical art, with its beautifully realised but largely pagan subject matter, proved a powerful lure to the cardinals and bishops of Rome. They would make over their churches and cathedrals in this gorgeous, old-new style, using its imperial origins to allude to the continuing dominance of Rome over Christendom. They were the most powerful patrons and commissioners of art in Renaissance Italy, much more so than the petty kings and princes who ruled its tiny domains. But as a solely male priesthood, they couldn't have women artists in their churches. Not only were they perceived as a distraction to the celibate priests, they were also the bearers of original sin. The hands that had plucked the apple of Eden absolutely couldn't be allowed to pick up a paintbrush.

There were of course women who did buck the trend. In Italy, Baroque painter Artemisia Gentileschi was widely respected as a painter of biblical subjects in the 17th century. Several women made names for themselves as still life painters in the Dutch Golden Age of the 17th century, notably Maria van Oosterwijck and Rachel Ruysch. Neoclassicist Angelica Kauffman ascended into the high ranks of European history painters in the 18th. Even among the stuffy Victorians, women



**ABOVE** Winckelmann was hugely influential, and his preferences went on to shape the 18th century Neoclassical movement

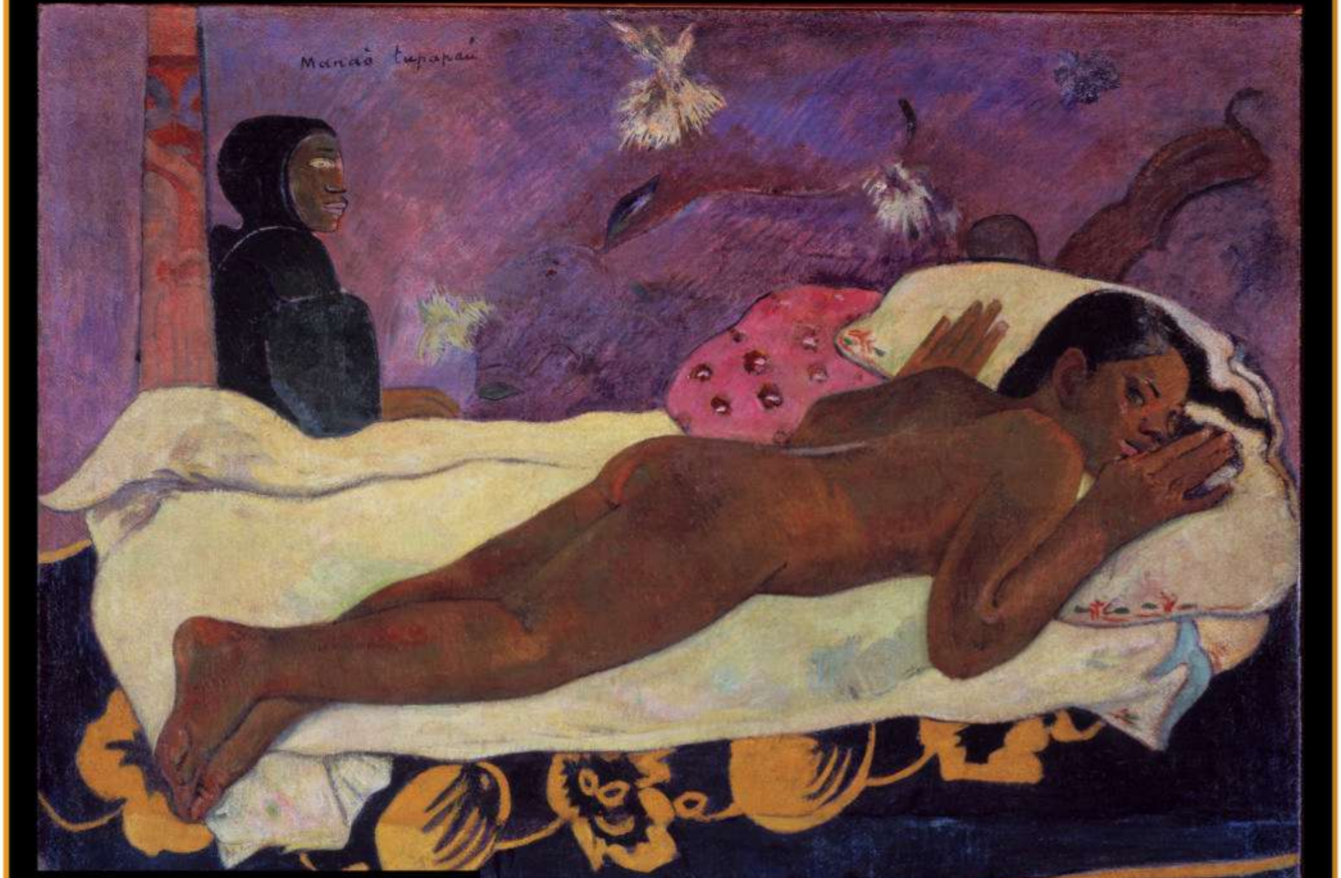
**LEFT** Artemisia Gentileschi is a rare example of a woman achieving artistic success with paintings of biblical subjects in the 17th century

## The problem of Exoticism

When Western artists strayed outside of the Western canon and into the beguiling realms of non-European cultures, this became known as Exoticism. The word 'exotic' is a construction of the European Age of Discovery; it comes from the Greek 'exo', meaning 'outside'. For the conquerors and colonisers of the Age of Discovery, 'exotic' came to encompass everything outside of Europe: the Middle and Far East, Asia, Africa, and the New World.

One form of Exoticism is Orientalism, which was fascinated with the imagery of the Middle East and North Africa. Another is Primitivism, which idealised non-industrial societies, particularly those of Pacific islanders who were depicted as living in a tropical idyll – French painter Paul Gauguin was a key proponent. Others were inspired by Africa; its traditional masks were an important factor in Pablo Picasso's development of Cubism.

The problem with Exoticism is exactly that: it exoticised. It created and perpetuated a fantasy version of its subject or influence, replacing what was real and authentic about a non-European aesthetic with an imaginary version that was often inextricably bound up with a prurient interest in women of colour or a viewpoint that was seen through a colonial lens.



French painter Paul Gauguin was fascinated by the so-called 'primitive' culture of 19th-century Tahiti. This painting is of his 13-year-old common-law wife, Teha'amana, whom he abandoned on the island

were adjacent to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and produced some of the era's most well-known works, particularly Evelyn De Morgan (many others, sadly, were sidelined as merely wives, girlfriends and models who dabbled). It was only in the 20th century with the rise of the women's liberation movements that professional female artists would become an accepted norm.

It would take even longer for artists of colour to take on the art establishment, and even then, they would be either outside of the traditional European Renaissance homelands – Joshua Johnson was the first documented Black African-American painter, working in Baltimore in the early 19th century – or much of their artistic cachet would be freighted with their edgy, 'outsider' status, like American Neoexpressionist Jean-Michel Basquiat, whose adjacency to graffiti and street culture in 1980s New York was part of his provocative appeal. In Britain, Chris Ofili won the prestigious Turner Prize in 1998, while the first Black artist to be elected to the Royal Academy of Arts was Sir Frank Bowling in 2005. Apart from a few dominant, world-famous names, the exhibition of contemporary Asian and African art is largely confined to its own continents, while older pieces seen in the West are often part of museum collections with legacies of dubious colonial-era acquisition practices.

The Western canon is problematic, but it's also vitally important to understanding art history. When we're interrogating it we need to remember that it was built upon subjective and sometimes misunderstood foundations, but also that it was created in a different time with different social mores. It was self-important and it got things wrong, but it was also the first attempt at understanding the history of human creative endeavour. As such, it's a great tool for approaching the study of the history of art, but it is only a beginning.

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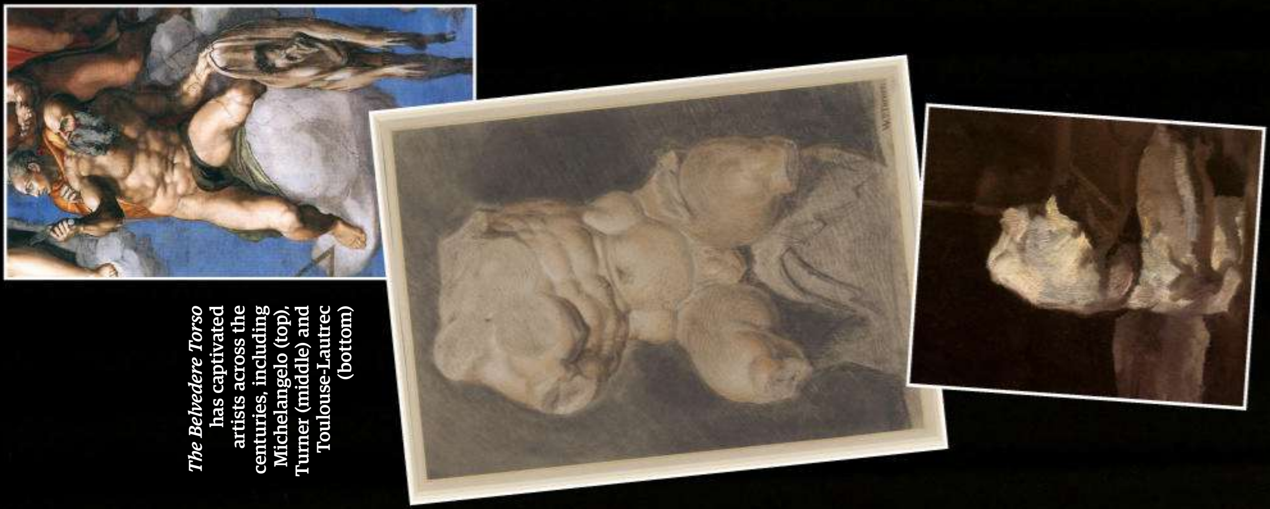
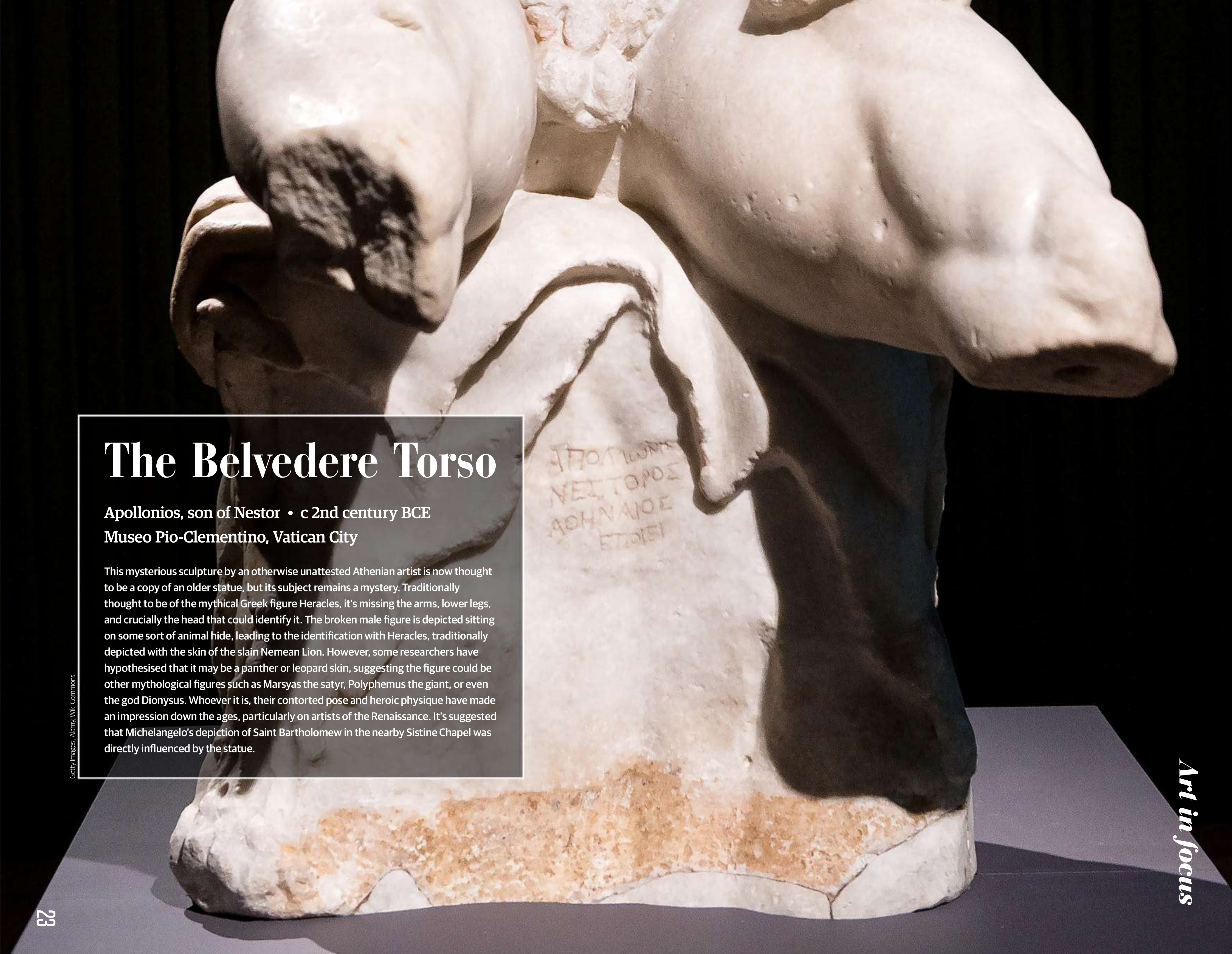


*The Belvedere Torso* has captivated artists across the centuries, including Michelangelo (top), Turner (middle) and Toulouse-Lautrec (bottom)



# The Belvedere Torso

**Apollonios, son of Nestor • c 2nd century BCE**
**Museo Pio-Clementino, Vatican City**

This mysterious sculpture by an otherwise unattested Athenian artist is now thought to be a copy of an older statue, but its subject remains a mystery. Traditionally thought to be of the mythical Greek figure Heracles, it's missing the arms, lower legs, and crucially the head that could identify it. The broken male figure is depicted sitting on some sort of animal hide, leading to the identification with Heracles, traditionally depicted with the skin of the slain Nemean Lion. However, some researchers have hypothesised that it may be a panther or leopard skin, suggesting the figure could be other mythological figures such as Marsyas the satyr, Polyphemus the giant, or even the god Dionysus. Whoever it is, their contorted pose and heroic physique have made an impression down the ages, particularly on artists of the Renaissance. It's suggested that Michelangelo's depiction of Saint Bartholomew in the nearby Sistine Chapel was directly influenced by the statue.

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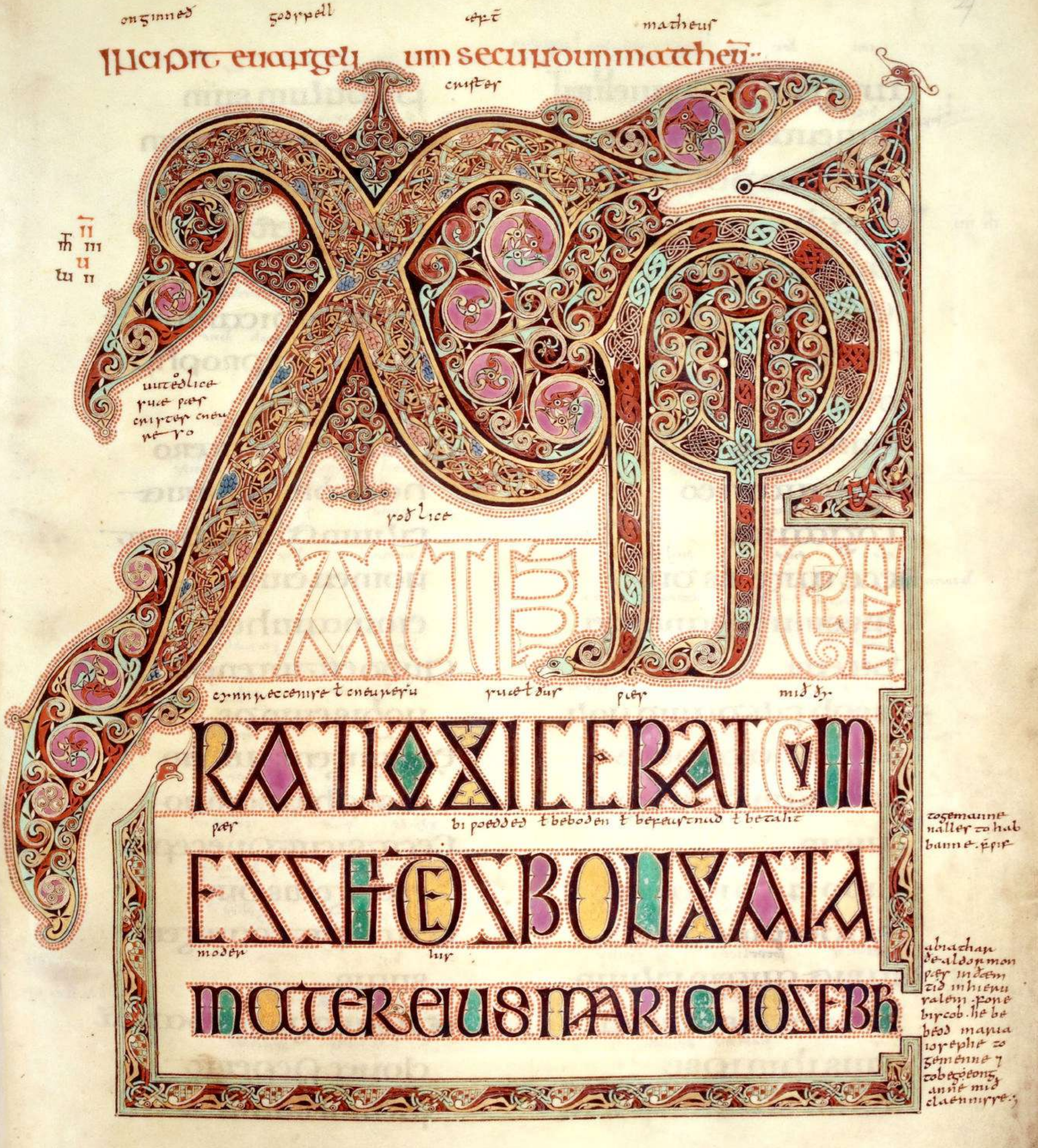


Incipit euangelium secundum mattheum

XPI AUTEM GENERATIO SIC ERAT CUM ESSET DESPONSATA MATER EIUS MARIA IOSEBH

# ILLUMINATING THE MIDDLE AGES

## Before great artworks adorned the walls of great houses, they embellished the pages of great books

Written by Mark Dolan

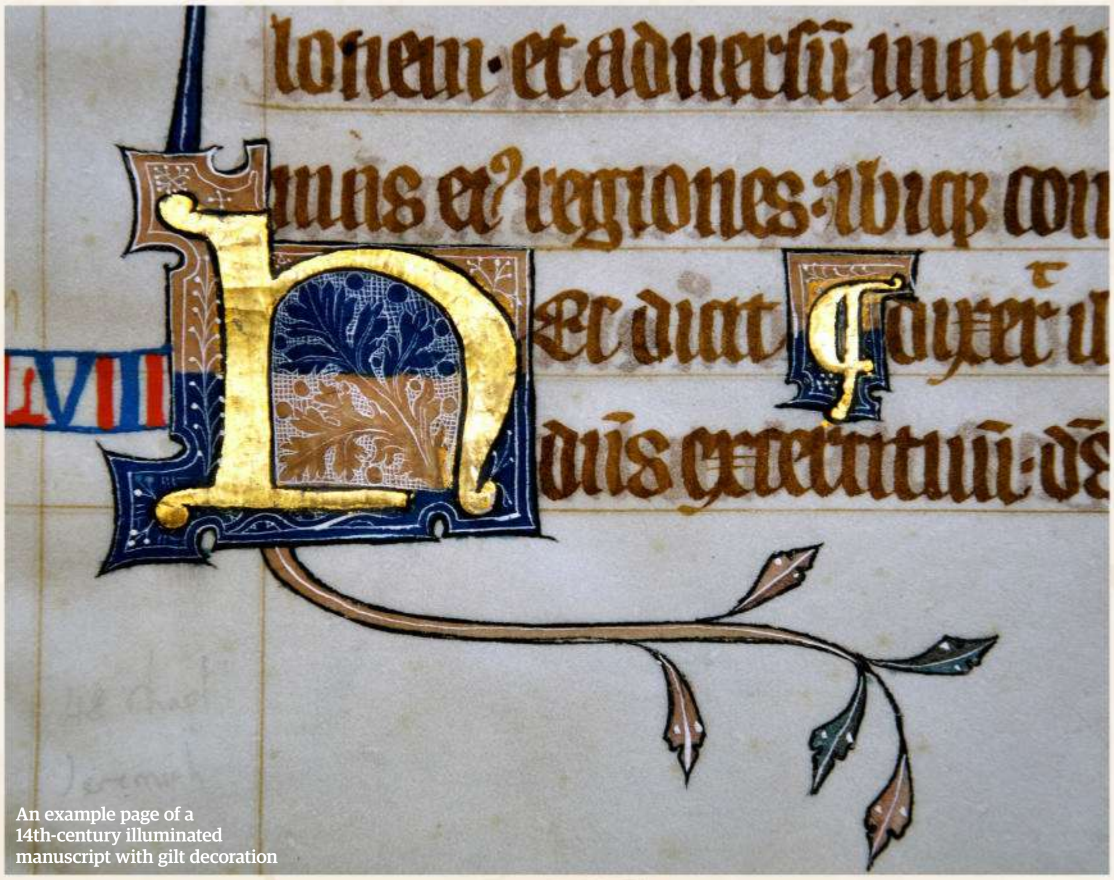
By definition, a manuscript is handmade - named from the latin words manus (hand) and scriptus (writing). A laborious undertaking in itself, but in the Middle Ages, illuminated manuscripts - books made, written and decorated by hand - were beautifully crafted and highly prized objects. Exclusively produced by monks in early medieval Europe, these books, which were commonly of a religious nature, were often created by multiple people, as each element required great skill and dedication. The manuscripts were written on either vellum (calf's skin) or parchment (goat or sheep skin), which had to be treated, stretched and dried before being ready for writing and decoration. The text would be copied from an existing book by a monk who often needed to travel far to borrow a copy to use, before being meticulously reproduced by the scribe. In some cases, the same monk would then complete the illumination of the book, but often this was done by others. To technically be considered an illuminated (or 'lighted up', from the Latin 'illuminare') manuscript, gold or silver leaf had to be applied to the leaves, but the books would also contain brightly coloured illustrations, flourishes in the starting letters of pages and drawings in the wide margins.

The skill and labour that went into producing a beautiful illuminated manuscript meant they were understood as complex works of art rather than a product of mass industry. Also, although they had staunchly religious beginnings by the 14th century, as universities were becoming more common and more people were able to read, books on topics such as history, astronomy and biology were produced and illuminated. Into the 15th century, when illuminated books had grown far beyond their origins as monastic undertakings and were being produced on larger scales in places such as

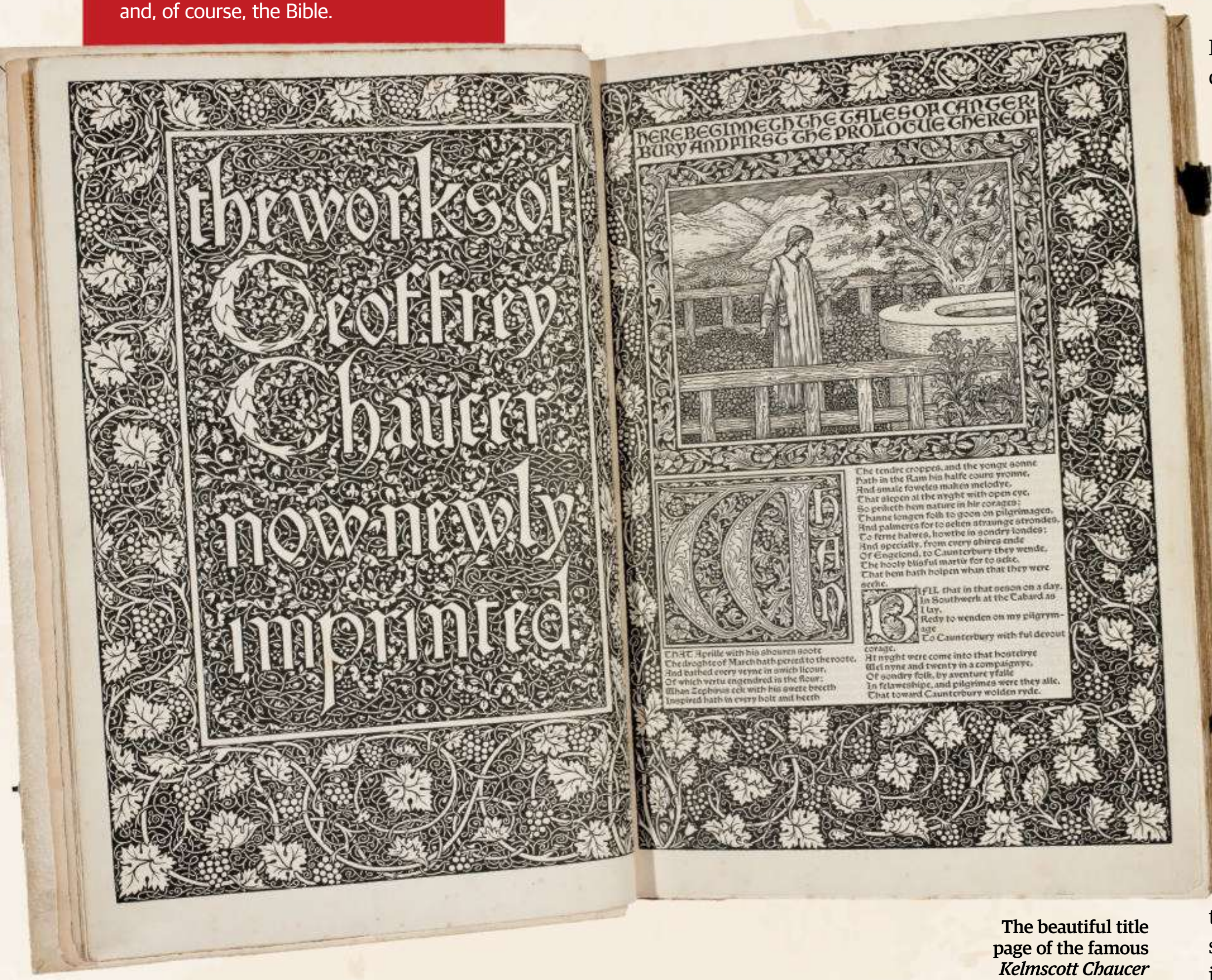
**LEFT** A stunning lettered page from the *Lindisfarne Gospels*

## REVIVING THE BEAUTIFUL BOOK

The arrival of Johannes Gutenberg's moveable press in 1450 was the beginning of the end for the illuminated manuscript, as it enabled books to be printed in much larger numbers much more easily. Over the next few hundred years, the old ways of making books began to fall by the wayside. In the late 1880s, the designer and poet William Morris founded a new press with the intention of returning to the production of books that were both useful and beautiful, made in small numbers with great care and focus on design. The outcome was the Kelmscott Press, which sparked the Private Press movement that would continue well into the mid-20th century. Books from the Kelmscott Press, especially the *Kelmscott Chaucer*, its crowning glory, were designed to be beautiful and were made with materials that harked back to the golden age of the illuminated book, using vellum to print and bind and using handmade paper to ensure both quality and beauty. Morris's work inspired a wide range of presses devoted to a similar ideal, creating stunning editions of classic works such as Shakespeare and, of course, the Bible.



**An example page of a 14th-century illuminated manuscript with gilt decoration**



the works of Geoffrey Chaucer now newly imprinted

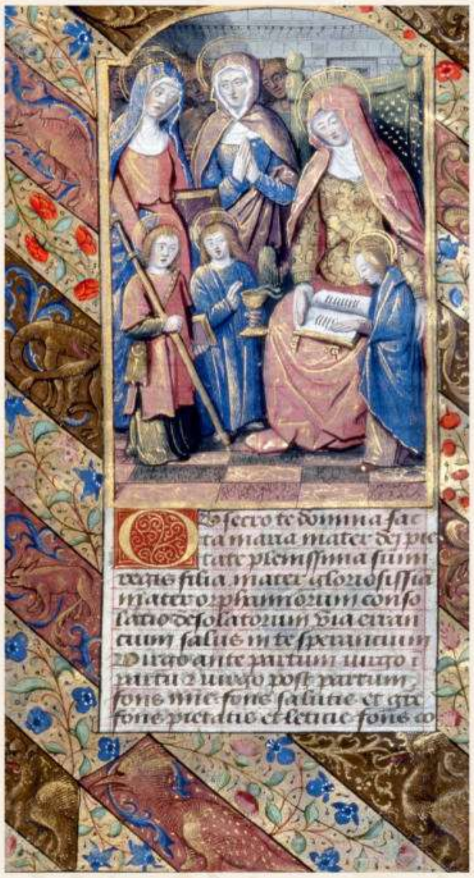
Here beginneth the Tales of Canterbury and first the Prologue thereof

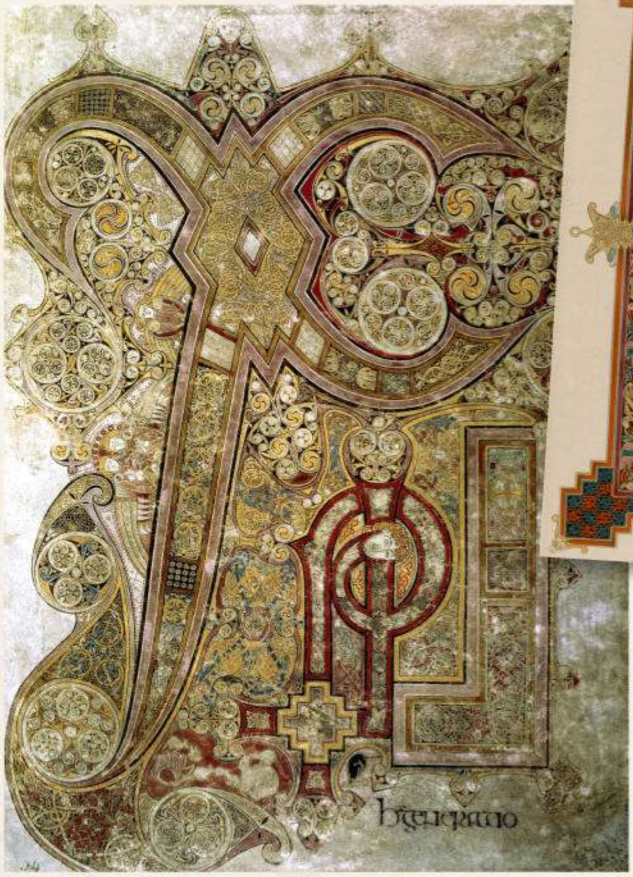
**The beautiful title page of the famous *Kelmscott Chaucer***

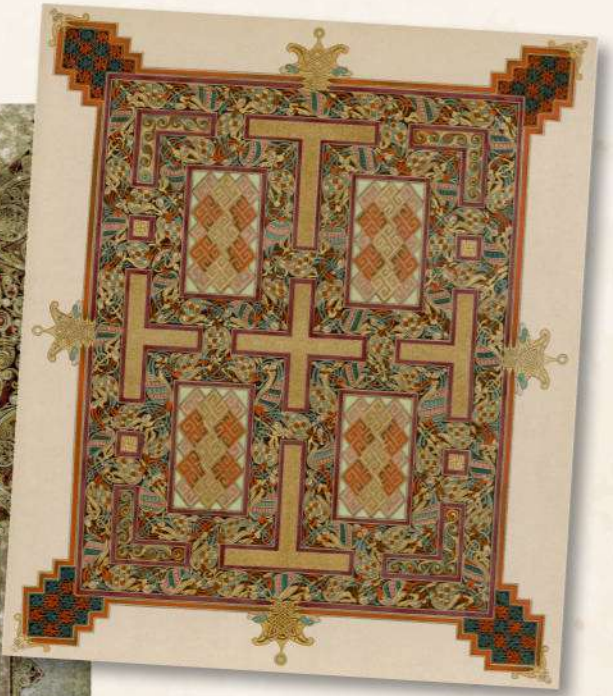
Paris and Bruges, they became common diplomatic gifts. Their beauty and artistry were renowned in much the same way as great paintings would be in the centuries to come. Some were even bound in lavish materials, such as silver or gold, and inlaid with precious stones and enamel panels.

If there is one kind of book most closely associated with the illuminated manuscript, it is the Book of Hours. These books were made for lay people rather than the clergy, and were often produced in miniature, replete with hand-painted illustrations that were designed to inspire reflection and devotion. They were a kind of prayer book, with different prayers to be said at different points of the day, but were also personal possessions that enabled people to engage with art in a way that was intimate, godly and accessible. Books of Hours became status symbols and fashion accessories as well as books and prayer paraphernalia.

There also emerged celebrity illuminators, the most notable being Simon Bening, an illuminator based in Bruges who was active during the 16th century. Bening's renown was so strong that not only was he well regarded in the Netherlands, but he was hailed by







Florentine artist Giorgio Vasari, one of the most significant writers in the history of Western art, known for his book, *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, which is considered the first art history book and a major source of information on masters such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. Books illuminated by Bening would have an added layer of prestige for those who were able to afford and show them off.

There are two illuminated manuscripts that stand above all others as possibly the greatest examples of the art: the *Book of Kells* and the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. The *Book of Kells*, while now well-known for its home in Trinity College, Dublin, was probably created in a monastery on the small Hebridean island of Iona (possibly also a monastery in Kells, County Meath) sometime around 800 CE. Written on vellum (requiring the skin of an estimated 185 calves) by three anonymous scribes (known as Hand A, Hand B and Hand C), the book contains the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and almost every one of its 680 pages is decorated. Many pages feature intricately designed full-page illuminations with gold tooling and complex imagery, depicting scenes from the gospels in a most lavish fashion.

> “THE CREATION OF SUCH A MINUTELY DETAILED BOOK WAS A MAJOR UNDERTAKING”

The creation of such a minutely detailed book was a major undertaking for the monks living a secluded life on a small northern island, and their dedication to their craft is evident today in the multilayered symbolism of the images, the attention to detail and the exquisite finishing of motifs that both related to Christian themes and were reminiscent of their cultural surroundings – featuring Celtic knots; a menagerie of animals from otters to peacocks; and incorporating natural coloured pigments such as woad, indigo, copper and orpiment.

Possibly around the same time that the monks of Iona were crafting the *Book of Kells* – or maybe a touch earlier – at another island monastery, this time at Lindisfarne, near Newcastle (and only fully cut off from the mainland during high tide), another of the greatest illuminated manuscripts of the medieval period was being created: the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. Similarly to the *Book of Kells*, the *Lindisfarne Gospels* tell the story of Jesus's life through the four New Testament gospels. Intricately detailed and featuring full-page illustrations throughout, this manuscript is famed for an unlikely aspect – its multiculturalism. Celtic influences are evident again in the book's designs, but also represented are some artistic flourishes thought to have been inspired by Italian and even Egyptian artistic traditions.

**ABOVE LEFT** A lettered page from the *Lindisfarne Gospels*

**ABOVE MIDDLE** The famous 'Chi-Rho' page of the *Book of Kells*, the page preceding Matthew's Gospel

**ABOVE RIGHT** A 'carpet page' from the *Lindisfarne Gospels* showing the influence of foreign artistic styles

Unusually for books of this time, we know the name of the manuscript's scribe, a monk named Eadfrith. He would have needed to use an existing text to copy from, and his version of the gospels closely resembles the *Latin Vulgate*, which was written around 300 years earlier. Testament to the melding of styles in the book can be seen in Eadfrith's choice of script, where he used a type called Insular Majuscule. This is a rounded script based on Roman precursors. In some title headings, however, he employed a much more angular style drawing on Anglo-Saxon runes.

Not only was the beauty of the *Lindisfarne Gospels* a testament to God's design, but the care and time that was required to produce it was seen by the monks as an undertaking that demonstrated their devotion to God. Used for ceremonial purposes, such a grand and deeply meaningful object would have undoubtedly had a powerful impact on worshippers who were able to gaze upon its unique brilliance.

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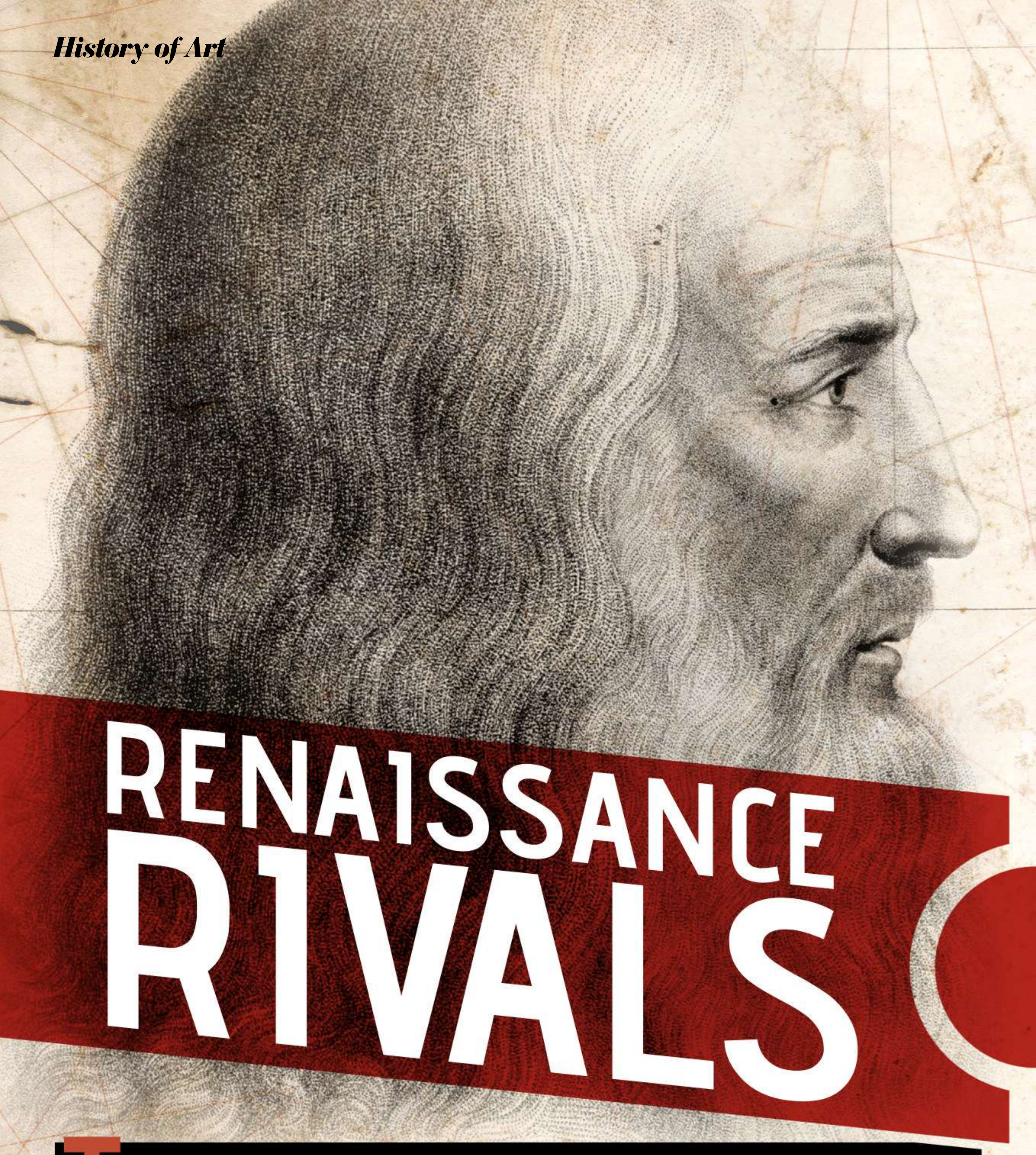
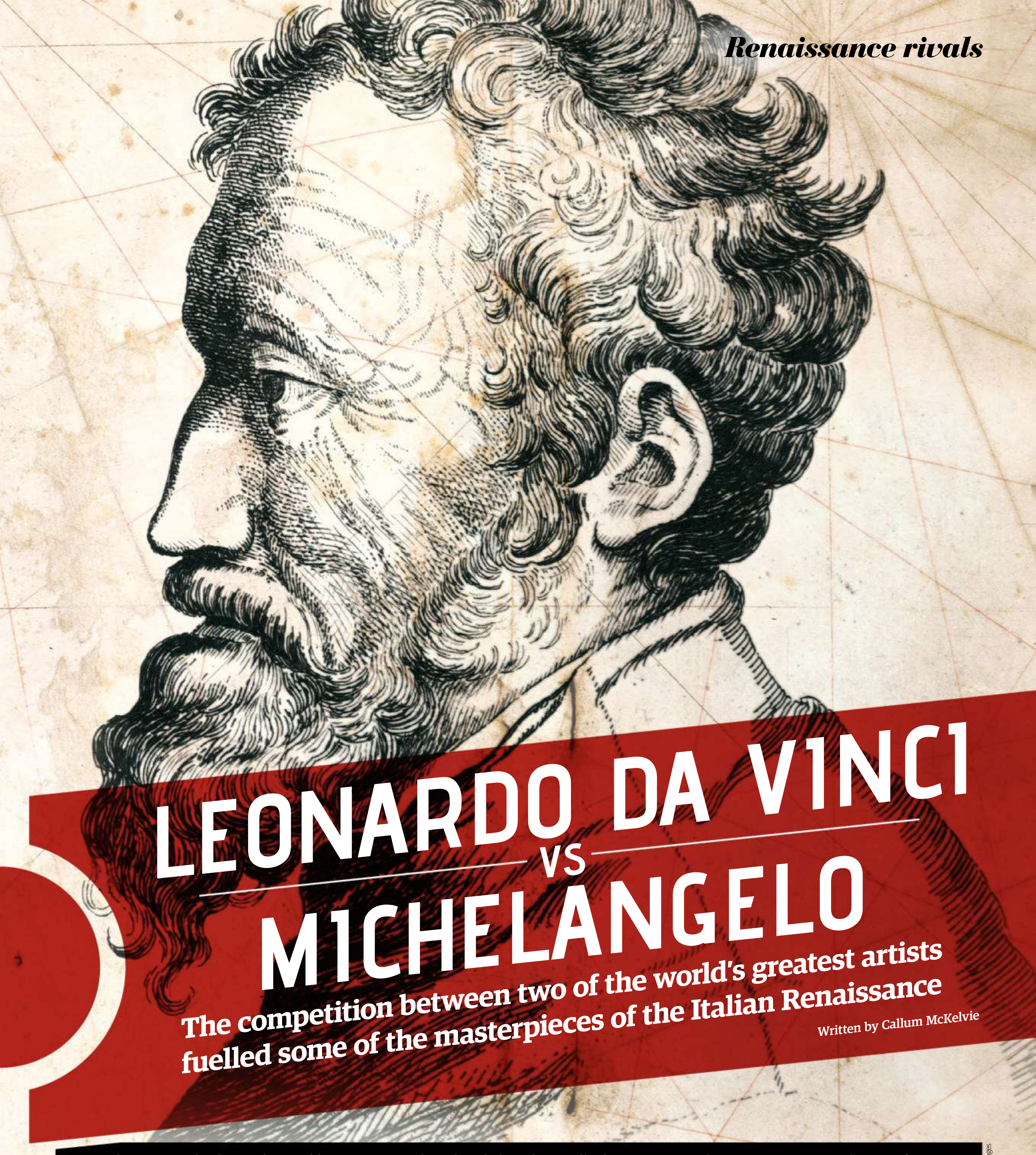


# RENAISSANCE RIVALS

The *Mona Lisa*, with her slight smile and the statue of *David* with his impressive physique are two of the most instantly recognisable works of art. Their reputation stretches beyond that of the early modern period and makes them arguably the two most famous artworks in the world. It is striking to think that these two pieces were completed in roughly the same period (*Mona Lisa* between 1503-19 and *David* between 1501-04) by two men who most likely knew each other personally and, if not, certainly knew each other's reputation: Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo.

These towering figures of the Italian Renaissance developed a bitter rivalry, as they did with other artists in the same period such as Raphael, which may have helped define



# LEONARDO DA VINCI VS MICHELANGELO

The competition between two of the world's greatest artists fuelled some of the masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance

Written by Callum McKelvie

© Getty Images

each artist's work. This rivalry would see a direct artistic competition between the two when, in the early 16th century, both were commissioned to complete contrasting frescoes in the Renaissance's equivalent of the 'Thrilla in Manilla'. But was the rivalry between Leonardo and Michelangelo actually that unusual? Or was it necessary competition in a world where artists relied on wealthy patrons to fund the creation of their masterpieces?

Before we delve into the sometimes frosty relationship between these two Renaissance rivals, it's important to set the stage for our two combatants. By the early 16th century the Italian Renaissance was already in full swing. It was defined by the notion of 'humanism', which was a philosophical concept, rooted in morality, regarding man and his importance

## EXPERT BIO

© Bernard Galewski

**MATTHEW LANDRUS**

Dr Matthew Landrus is a research fellow at the university of Oxford who specialises on the history of art and science in renaissance Italy. He is the author Leonardo da Vinci's Giant Crossbow (Springer, 2010) and Leonardo da Vinci: 500 Years on (Welbeck, 2018).

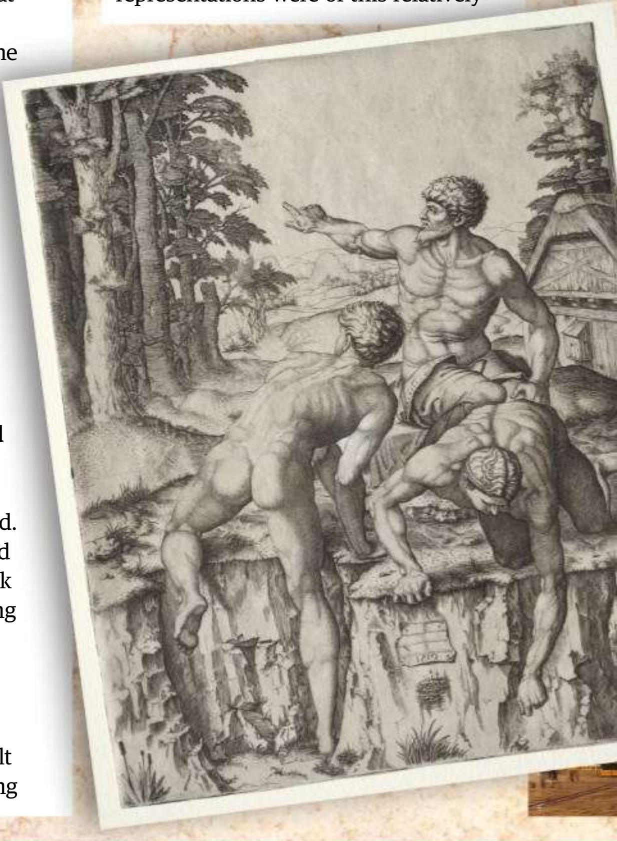
in the universe. Florence, the capital of the Tuscany region of Italy, became an important centre of the Renaissance and remains a city defined by its architecture and art. In this period wealthy elites like kings and princes, well-to-do families such as the Medicis (who in the 1430s gained control of Florence itself) or even institutions like cathedrals and monasteries acted as patrons who commissioned artists and artist studios to create on their behalf. This was a period when painters, writers and thinkers could devote themselves to their art for a living, far removed from today's world where artists often have to take other jobs to support themselves and governments, in particular, seem to take little interest in financially supporting the arts.

This was the world into which Leonardo da Vinci was born in 1452. Despite being the result of an out-of-wedlock affair with a young peasant woman, Caterina, the young Leonardo grew up on his father Ser Piero da Vinci's estate. At around 12-15, he became an apprentice to the artist Andrea del Verrocchio in whose workshop he learnt painting and sculpture and developed his interest in the mechanical arts - already crafting a number of technical sketches for which he would later be known. His interest in science as well as art meant that he very quickly became the definition of the term 'Renaissance Man'. In 1482 he moved to Milan and worked as an engineer and painter to Duke Ludovico Sforza. Leonardo was still in Milan and already in his early 50s when the young Michelangelo began to develop an important reputation. Leonardo had just completed one of his masterpieces, *The Last Supper*, which was worked on between 1495 and 1498. In 1500 he moved back to Florence where he likely met the rising star Michelangelo.

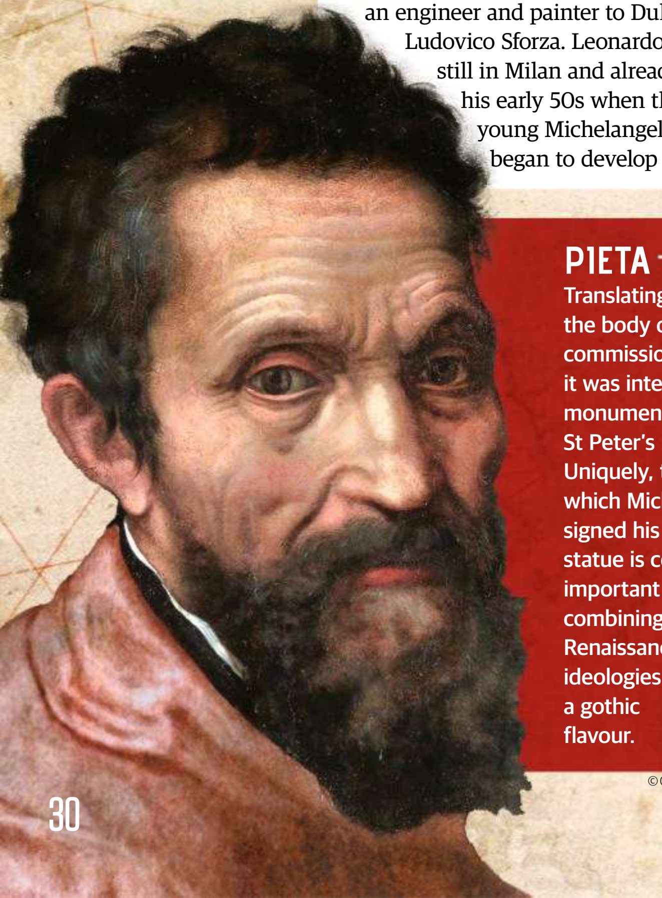
Twenty-three years Leonardo's junior, Michelangelo (born Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni) was primarily a sculptor, despite later becoming known for his impressive frescoes, most notably the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. At age 13 he was accepted as the apprentice to Domenico Ghirlandaio, though he purportedly left after a single year claiming he had nothing more to learn. It was at this point that Lorenzo de' Medici of the influential family of the same name took the young man under his wing, providing him with both an excellent education and access to the Medici art collection. This gave Michelangelo an appreciation of the art and philosophy of the ancient Romans and Greeks.

"In the late 15th century and into the early 16th century, there were a number of sculptures dug up in Rome, most notably the *Apollo Belvedere*, excavated around 1489, and the *Laocoön*, excavated in 1506," explains Dr Matthew Landrus of the University of Oxford. "This discovery and others resulted in a rise of interest in classical work and classical approaches to painting and sculpture." This influence is particularly evident in the work of Michelangelo, especially in the creation of his statue of *David*.

However, *David* would also result in one of the first signs of a growing rivalry between the two men. This huge statue was carved from a vast block of marble which had previously been deemed unworkable by two other sculptors due to it having too many imperfections. The result was that for 25 years, the marble remained untouched. Enter the 26-year-old genius Michelangelo, who accepted the challenge and whose resultant 14ft statue depicts the Biblical hero David of 'David and Goliath' fame in a previously unseen light. "Michelangelo changed the discourse of how to portray David, who was considered a personification of Florence," says Landrus. "Previous representations were of this relatively

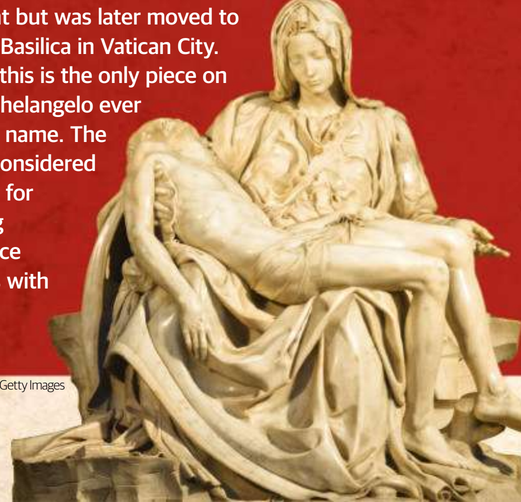


**BELOW** Five of Michelangelo's most famous works



## PIETA

Translating as 'the pity', *Pieta* depicts Mary holding the body of Jesus after the crucifixion. Originally commissioned by the French Cardinal Jean de Bilhères, it was intended to be part of his funeral monument but was later moved to St Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. Uniquely, this is the only piece on which Michelangelo ever signed his name. The statue is considered important for combining Renaissance ideologies with a gothic flavour.



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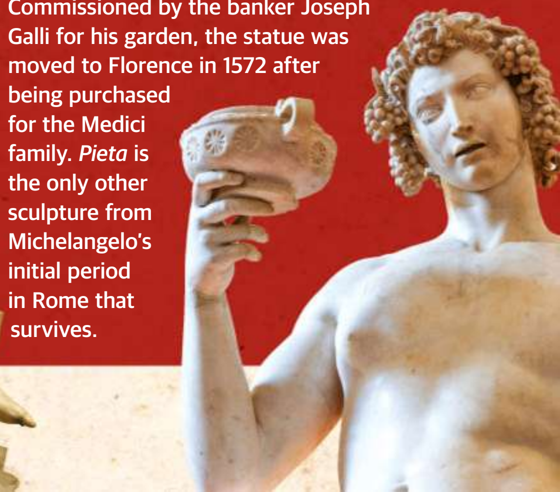
## BACCHUS

Completed between 1496 and 1497, *Bacchus* is one of Michelangelo's early works and demonstrates his incredible skill despite his relative inexperience. Commissioned by the banker Joseph Galli for his garden, the statue was moved to Florence in 1572 after being purchased for the Medici family. *Pieta* is the only other sculpture from Michelangelo's initial period in Rome that survives.



normal teenage boy, but Michelangelo changed that tradition by producing this muscular, expressive sculpture, showing his readiness for battle as a way of saying that Florence should see itself as not a normal teenager but as strong and ready for battle." However, despite the work's obvious power Leonardo seemed not to share in his contemporaries' enthusiasm for the statue. When it was decided that it would not be placed atop a cathedral as originally intended, Leonardo tried to sway opinion away from placing it in a prominent position within the Loggia della Signoria (in the Piazza della Signoria). Landrus quotes a record of the meeting on the *David*, on 25 January 1503, with 27 other consuls and overseers for the cathedral, where Leonardo recommended that it should instead be "on the parapet where they hang the tapestries on the side of the wall; with appropriate ornament and in a way that does not interfere with ceremonies of state." Landrus says: "With the *David*, Michelangelo's reputation improved significantly, and if he had heard that Leonardo recommended against a central position in the Loggia, he would've been annoyed."

What was it Leonardo had against Michelangelo's *David*? It appears that the two may have had somewhat differing opinions when it came to their crafts. During the early 16th century, despite the fact that wealthy patrons had contributed to a rebirth of the visual arts, at this point they were not viewed as on the same intellectual plane as others such as poetry or philosophy. Michelangelo was part of this environment where painters had a great deal of courtly respect, as did sculptors, but in these courtly debates the poets were often the supreme scholars. "Painters and sculptors were during the 15th century beginning to get recognition as courtiers, whereas the practical arts were not previously considered intellectual," explains Landrus. "What we see in Michelangelo's work as sculptor, painter, architect and poet is that he actively worked to improve the social status of the practical arts."

> "LEONARDO WAS STILL IN MILAN AND ALREADY IN HIS EARLY 50S WHEN THE YOUNG MICHELANGELO APPEARED ON THE SCENE"

However, just before he had contact with Michelangelo, Leonardo wrote at the Milanese debates about which of the practical and liberal arts were superior, putting painting above sculpture. If Michelangelo had known of these debates it is likely he would have disputed such claims about sculpture. "Leonardo had written that 'the sculptor conducts his work with greater bodily fatigue', by contrast with the 'mental fatigue' of the painter, and that the sculptor 'engages in a highly mechanical exercise, often accompanied by great amounts of sweat composed of dust and converted into mud'," says Landrus. "This is part of another ongoing discussion of the work of the sculptor as not being as intellectually engaged as that of the painter."

Perhaps the defining moment of the pair's relationship was the events that occurred when they were each commissioned to redecorate the Council Hall of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. In 1503 the 51-year-old Leonardo was

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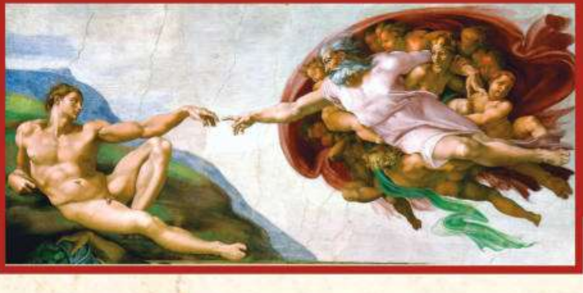
**FAR-LEFT** A print by Marcantonio Raimondi showing one of the surviving preparatory drawings for Michelangelo's *Battle of Cascina*

**LEFT** The Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, where Michelangelo and Leonardo were commissioned to paint separate frescos on the walls of the council hall

**RIGHT** Michelangelo's *David*. Leonardo said it should not be put in a prominent place in the Loggia della Signoria

## CEILING OF THE SISTINE CHAPEL

Originally the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City was painted blue and covered in golden stars, while the walls were adorned with frescos by various artists. In 1508 Pope Julius II hired Michelangelo to give the ceiling a makeover, despite the young artist being known primarily as a sculptor. The resultant work is incredibly striking, particularly the image of God reaching out to give life to Adam. The Sistine Chapel is used by the cardinals of the Catholic Church when selecting a new pope.

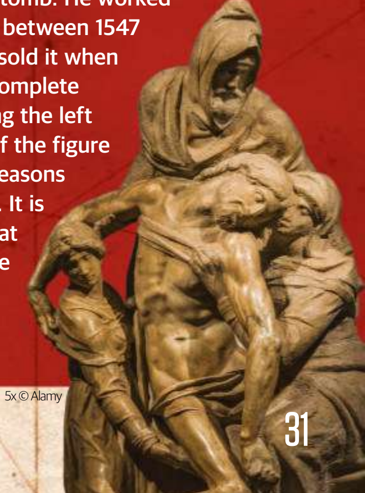


## MADONNA OF BRUGES

Created shortly after the renowned *Pieta*, this *Madonna* was the only statue to leave Italy during Michelangelo's lifetime when a rich cloth merchant from Bruges, Belgium, purchased it. The statue was removed to protect it during both the French Revolution and World War II, first to Paris and secondly it was smuggled to Germany before being found hidden in a salt mine in Austria.

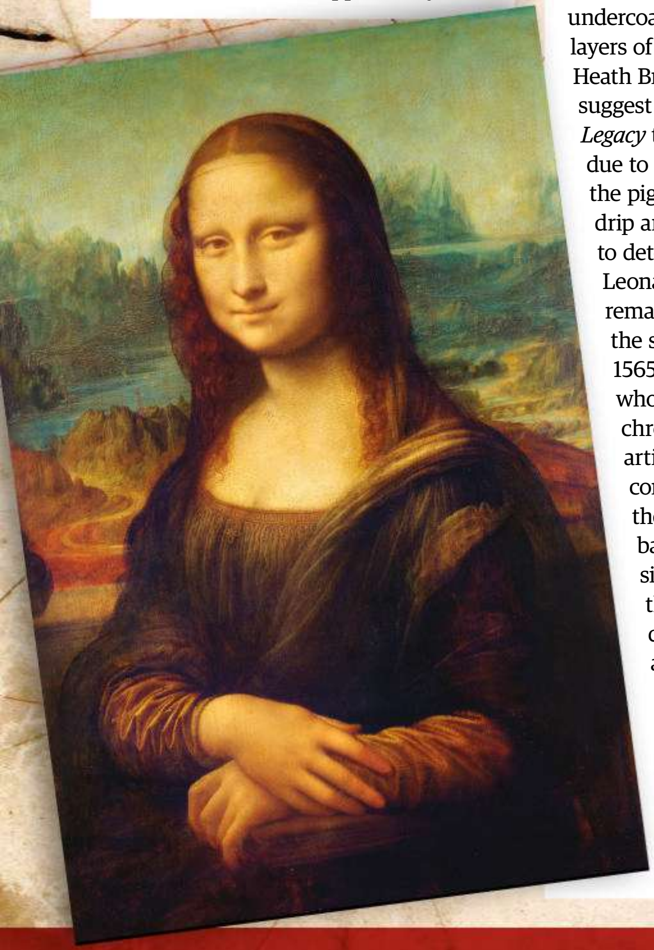
## THE DEPOSITION

Housed in St Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, *The Deposition* was a piece Michelangelo originally carved for his family tomb. He worked on the statue between 1547 and 1555 but sold it when it was still incomplete after damaging the left leg and arm of the figure of Christ for reasons still unknown. It is speculated that it was because the marble may have been flawed.



5x © Alamy

challenged to paint a vast wall fresco of the Battle of Anghiari, fought on 29 June 1440 between the forces of Milan and a league of Italian states led by the Republic of Florence. However, just a year later Michelangelo accepted a similar commission to complete the remaining mural in the same hall. The younger artist was to depict the Battle of Cascina, which took place in 1364 between Pisan and Florentine forces. Although it was never intended as such, the painting of the battle scenes must have been seen as an opportunity for a competition between the two artists. As Landrus explains: "Having to produce works that would be side by side. That's competition, isn't it? At that point you have to show who is the better painter."



To create his Battle of the Anghiari, Leonardo looked to experiment, and according to an anonymous author referred to as Anonimo Gaddino he chose to use an 'encaustic' (wax and pigment) method noted by the ancient Roman writer Pliny the Elder in his book *Natural History*. Leonardo thought this would allow him to create an undercoat that could absorb multiple layers of pigments in wax. Christopher Heath Brown and Jean-Pierre Isbouts suggest in their work *The Da Vinci Legacy* that the experiment failed due to the wall refusing "to absorb the pigments, causing the paint to drip and run… the fresco began to deteriorate almost as soon as Leonardo's brush left it." What remained was marvelled at for the successive decades until 1565 when Giorgio Vasari, a man who had spent so much time chronicling the lives of the great artists, including Leonardo, was commissioned to paint over the master's work with another battle scene. In the years since this travesty occurred, the *Battle of Anghiari* has developed a reputation as a 'lost Leonardo', with several attempts to find traces of the painting beneath Vasari's.

Michelangelo's progress, on the other hand, although avoiding any similar disasters, was lacking in comparison to his rival's. Michelangelo completed a complex 'cartoon', which has nothing to do with Mickey Mouse and is in fact a word meaning a "full-scale preparatory drawing for a fresco, oil painting or a tapestry" according to the Royal Academy of Arts. Completed in charcoal it was said to be a wonder to behold, though unfortunately it too is now lost. What does remain are a number of preparatory sketches, including a rather striking study of one of the combatants lower back and bare buttocks, which was auctioned at Christie's on the 5 July 2011. Just before the battle the men of the Florentine army were purportedly enjoying a spot of skinny dipping when the alarm sounded, and were forced to run and grab weapons in a mad panic. The resultant surviving sketch is striking and we can only wonder how magnificent the cartoon may have been had it survived.

> "*DAVID* WOULD ALSO RESULT IN ONE OF THE FIRST SIGNS OF A GROWING RIVALRY BETWEEN THE TWO MEN"

**LEFT** The *Mona Lisa*, Leonardo's masterpiece which was still being worked on in his studio upon his death in 1519

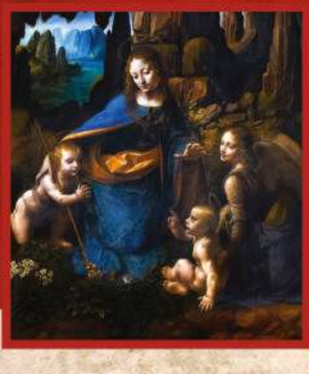
**RIGHT** Leonardo's bronze horse, supposedly the subject of a row between the artists

Despite the fact that these two works were not completed, the direct competition between two of the world's greatest artists was, in the words of the art historian Kenneth Clark, "the turning point of the Renaissance."

Such was the legend of the rivalry between the two that a number of unflattering stories about the pair's relationship began to emerge. One anecdote shows a particularly bitter moment between them. One day Leonardo was called by two men in the Piazza Santa Trinità who were discussing Dante. Leonardo was asked by the pair if he could help settle a dispute concerning Dante and, spotting Michelangelo, he called over to him, suggesting he might be better informed. However, the younger Michelangelo mistook Leonardo's meaning and

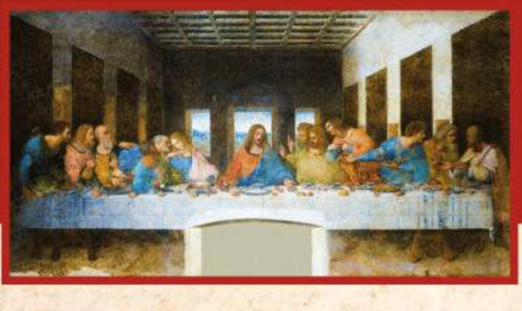
## VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS

This was originally intended to be part of a magnificent altarpiece in the chapel of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary in the church of San Francesco Grande, though this never occurred. Despite being commissioned in 1483 it wasn't completed until 1508, and a dispute over money caused Leonardo to sell his first version, meaning that two are now in existence. The one pictured here is available to view in the National Gallery, London.



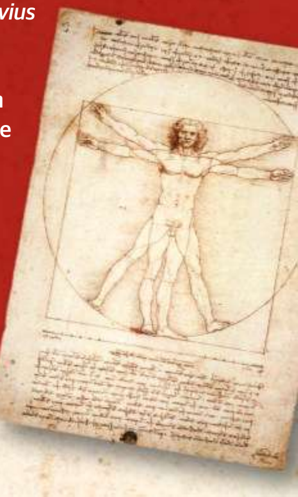
## THE LAST SUPPER

Painted on the wall of a former Dominican Convent at Santa Maria delle Grazie, this fresco has undergone numerous restorations since its original composition. Leonardo carried out numerous preparations before he began work on *The Last Supper*, including creating a number of preparatory sketches. The size of *The Last Supper* is incredibly impressive, at 4.6 metres high by eight metres wide.



## VITRUVIAN MAN

Although Leonardo is perhaps rightly remembered best for his paintings, his scientific sketches are still important works of art. Completed in 1492, the sketch is also known as *The proportions of the human body according to Vitruvius* showing Leonardo's intention to demonstrate what he believed to be the ideal human proportions and building on the work of the Roman architect Vitruvius. The drawing is surrounded by Leonardo's own notes and today is part of the permanent collection of the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice.



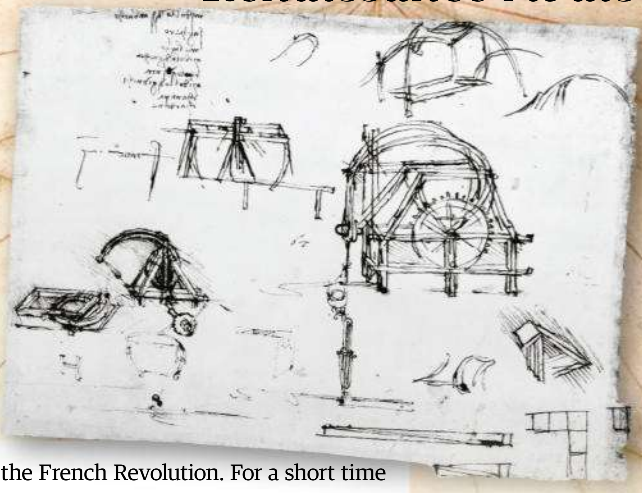
inferred that he was insulting him. In response he is said to have stated: "Explain it yourself, you who designed a horse to cast in bronze and couldn't cast it and abandoned it out of shame."

The insult was a reference to Leonardo's *Horse*, a huge statue commissioned by Ludovico Sforza. Leonardo crafted a 24-foot clay model and intended to cast the sculpture from it in bronze. The always-experimental Leonardo devised a complex process with which he hoped to cast it in one go. However, the French invasion put a halt to any such plans. When troops marched into Milan in 1499 and happened upon the gargantuan clay statue they used it for target practice and completely destroyed it. If true, Michelangelo's inference that it was Leonardo's innovative process that caused the statue to be abandoned and not the French invasion must have angered Leonardo. In 1494, Ludovico Sforza gave the bronze reserved for the horse to the city of Ferrara to make cannons for use against the invading French. In 1999, a full-scale bronze version of Leonardo's horse was unveiled in Milan after businessman Charles C Dent spent 17 years raising funds for Nina Akamu to create the artist's lost masterpiece.

On the 2 May 1519, Leonardo da Vinci died at the age of 67. Arguably the most famous painting in the entire world, the *Mona Lisa*, was still in his studio despite having been started in 1503, suggesting he had continued to work on it for several years. Following his death the painting was acquired by the French King Francis I and remained in the royal collection until it was claimed as the property of the people during the French Revolution. For a short time Napoleon had the *Mona Lisa* hung in his bedroom, before it ended up in the Louvre, where it can be viewed today.

Michelangelo died on 18 February 1564, his works such as *David* and the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel ensuring that, like his rival, his reputation would continue to thrive centuries later.

The relationship between Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo must be viewed in the context of its time and place. "For the early modern period, this rivalry was normal," says Landrus. "This was a very important part of the substantial competition for commissions, especially in Florence, where there were many artists." Exactly how personal the conflict between the two got we will never know, but for the most part the rivalry seems to have remained relatively healthy. In fact, it's possible that the resultant air of competition helped to foster an environment in which some of the world's greatest masterpieces were created. Landrus concludes: "The importance of this rivalry, as with all rivalries between studios during this time, was that the quality of the work improved significantly."



**ABOVE** An example of some of Leonardo's technical drawings. This sketch is for a perpetual motion device

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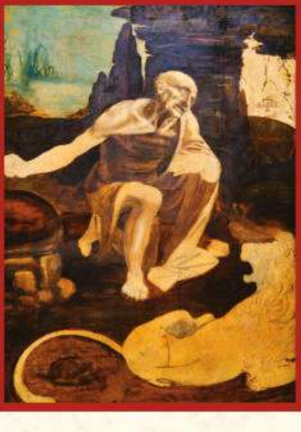
**BELOW** Five of Leonardo da Vinci's most famous works

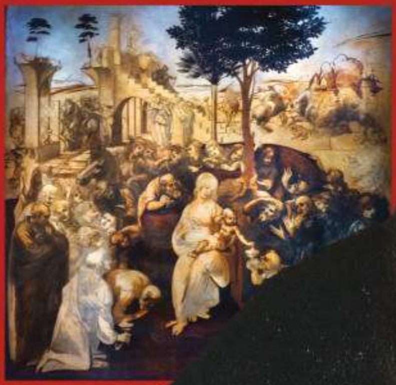
## SAINT JEROME IN THE WILDERNESS

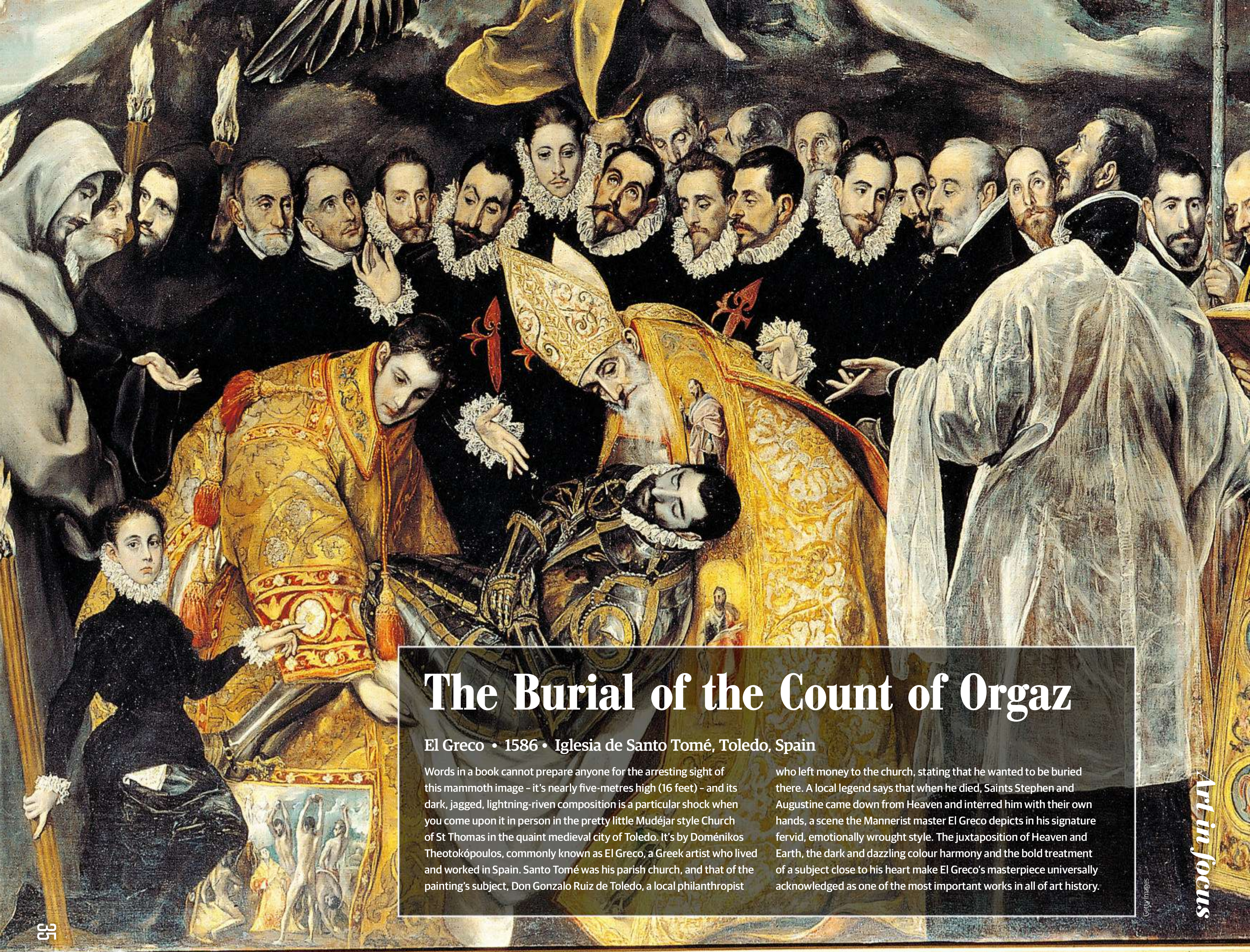
Another religious painting, albeit a particularly striking one, the figure depicted here is St Jerome who is known for translating the Bible into Latin. Later in life he was said to have become a hermit and lived in the desert, and it is this period that Leonardo chooses to depict. Shockingly, despite the work's incredible power, it is in fact unfinished.



## THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

Another unfinished work, this was commissioned by the Augustinian monks of San Donato a Scopeto in Florence, but when Leonardo had to leave a year later the painting was left incomplete and remained so upon his death. The Virgin Mary and child are in the centre, and the painting is particularly striking due to its depiction of the pleading old men and armed soldiers surrounding them.





Getty Images

# The Burial of the Count of Orgaz

## El Greco • 1586 • Iglesia de Santo Tomé, Toledo, Spain

Words in a book cannot prepare anyone for the arresting sight of this mammoth image – it's nearly five-metres high (16 feet) – and its dark, jagged, lightning-riven composition is a particular shock when you come upon it in person in the pretty little Mudéjar style Church of St Thomas in the quaint medieval city of Toledo. It's by Doménikos Theotokópoulos, commonly known as El Greco, a Greek artist who lived and worked in Spain. Santo Tomé was his parish church, and that of the painting's subject, Don Gonzalo Ruiz de Toledo, a local philanthropist who left money to the church, stating that he wanted to be buried there. A local legend says that when he died, Saints Stephen and Augustine came down from Heaven and interred him with their own hands, a scene the Mannerist master El Greco depicts in his signature fervid, emotionally wrought style. The juxtaposition of Heaven and Earth, the dark and dazzling colour harmony and the bold treatment of a subject close to his heart make El Greco's masterpiece universally acknowledged as one of the most important works in all of art history.

# Caravaggio's
# LIFE OF CRIME

## The scandalous story of the killer artist that painted Rome red

**Written by Ella Carter**

“A stocky young man… with a thin black beard, thick eyebrows and black eyes who goes dressed all in black… in a rather disorderly fashion.” This is one of the only known descriptions of a man called Michelangelo Merisi. Few people recognised his name, but most would pull their children closer and cross the road if they saw the swagger of his silhouette cut through the gloom of Rome's backstreets.

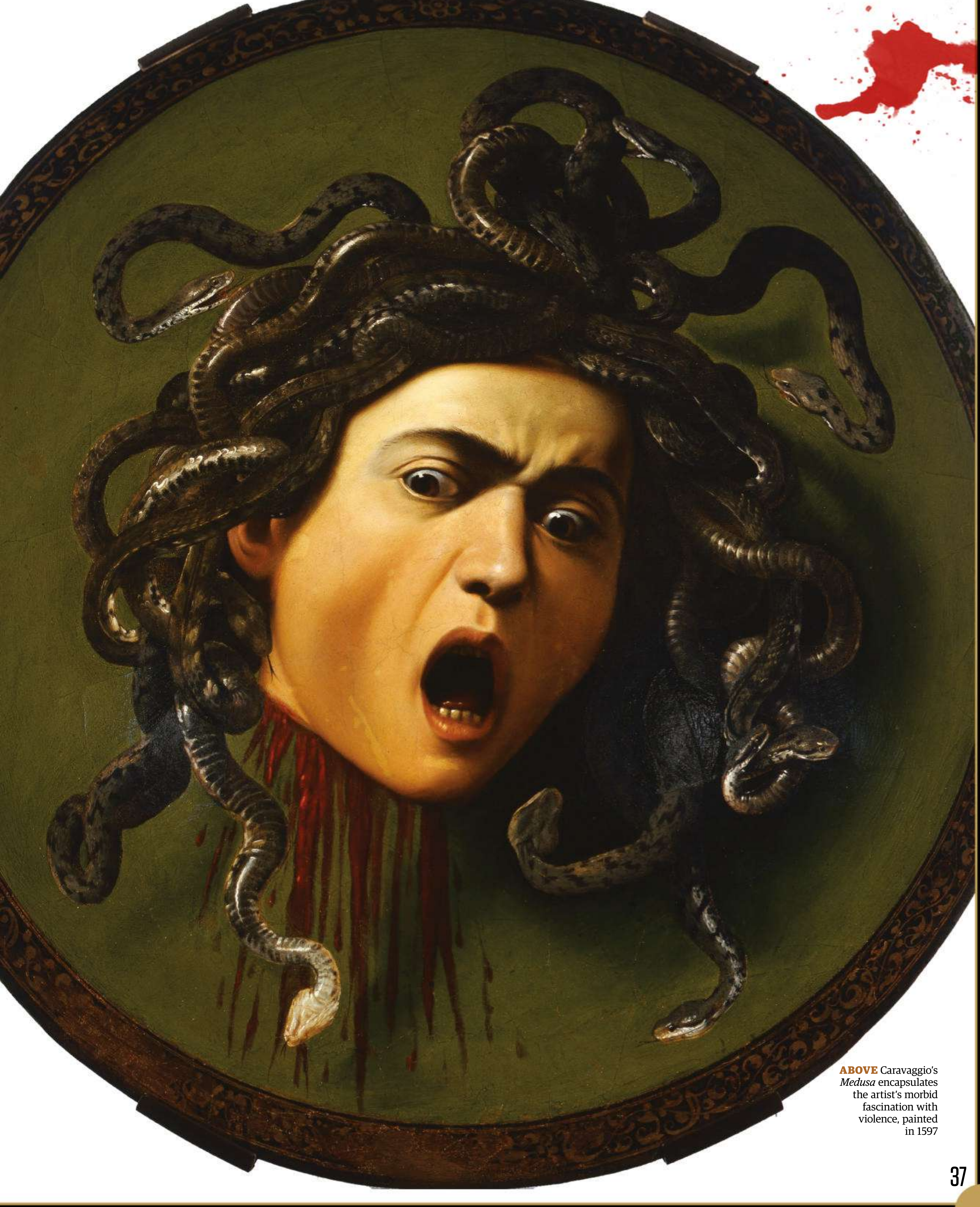
The dark description matches a dark life: a thug, a brawler, and frequently locked up for lewd behaviour and illicit activity. Challenge him in the shadows and you may live to regret it, but pause to view him in the light and you will leave astonished. By day, this man painted some of the world's most glorious masterpieces. Towering canvases of breathtakingly detailed scenes, exultantly displayed above altars and splashed across the walls of Rome's elite.

Michelangelo Merisi may exist in history with relative anonymity, but the master behind the name is Caravaggio – one of the world's most celebrated baroque painters. His life, much like his work, shows a twist from dark to light and back again, as incredible talent existed hand-in-hand with a reputation as a vengeful and unpredictable scoundrel.

16th-century Rome was full to bursting with soldiers, beggars, priests and whores. Yet, in 1592, when 21-year-old Caravaggio made his way to the Eternal City, the depraved core of the Roman metropolis was being steadily coated with shiny Catholic gloss by Pope Clement VIII. Artists were in high demand, and this was the city that would both make and break the young painter. In a style that was to colour his entire life, Caravaggio showed up in Rome alone and on the run, potentially dodging his first murder charge.

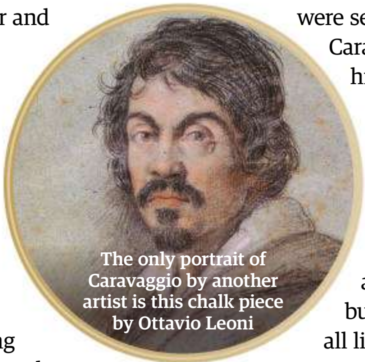
Born in September 1571 to an artisan stonemason, the young Michelangelo Merisi grew up in a small town near Milan called Caravaggio – the name he would later adopt as his own. He lost his father and grandfather to bubonic plague at a young age, and so with no male role model to act as a moral compass, the adolescent Caravaggio was seduced by Milan's shady underworld. Armed with quick wit and a sharp temper, he let the current of general skulduggery carry him until he had sunken so deep that he had to run to Rome for his life.

Not content with painting just fruit and flowers in the studio of his master, Caravaggio began working on his own paintings. Before he began to paint the scenes from the Bible for which he is so renowned, Caravaggio painted ordinary people and *Boy With a Basket of Fruit* was one of his earliest works. The boy in the painting is fresh-faced and pretty, with an easy attitude and an alluring air. It's thought that Caravaggio used his fellow artist and friend Mario Minniti as a model for this painting. His suggestive expression and come-to-bed eyes have led many



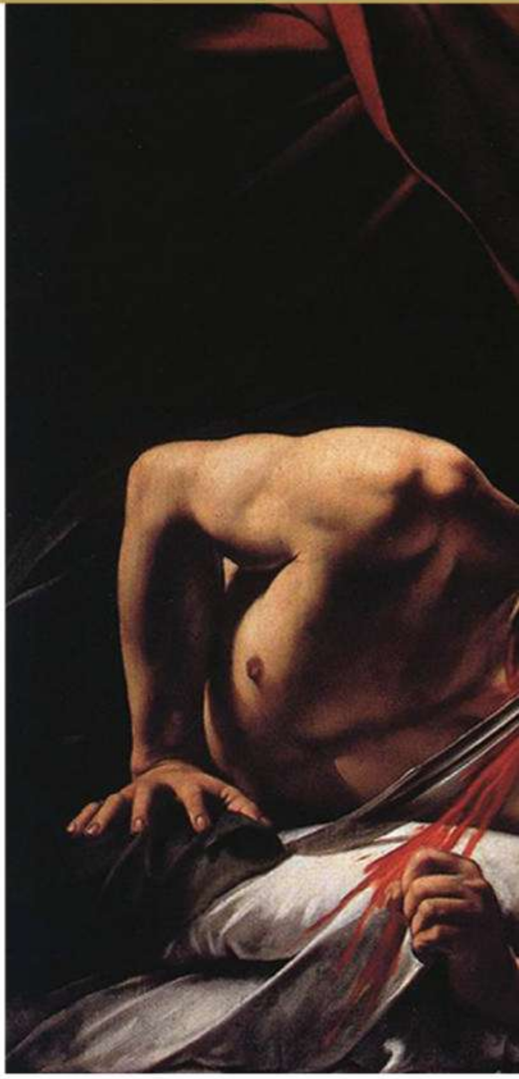
**ABOVE** Caravaggio's *Medusa* encapsulates the artist's morbid fascination with violence, painted in 1597 to assume that the pair's relationship extended past the camaraderie of disgruntled painters' apprentices. In his short life, Caravaggio never married, but he most certainly enjoyed the company of both men and women – in a city so brimming with prostitutes and purveyors of the flesh, who could resist?

In 1595, Caravaggio got his first 'big break' in the form of the patronage from Cardinal Francesco Maria Bourbon del Monte. He was an art lover and a collector, and helped to secure Caravaggio's first commission for Christian artwork, paintings for San Luigi dei Francesi, the Church of the French in Rome. It was also purported that del Monte was a keen indulger in the company of men, and that in offering the young painter lodging and work, there was a more lustful purpose beside his admirations of Caravaggio's professional talents. Of course such a scandal is just speculation, no evidence exists as proof either way.

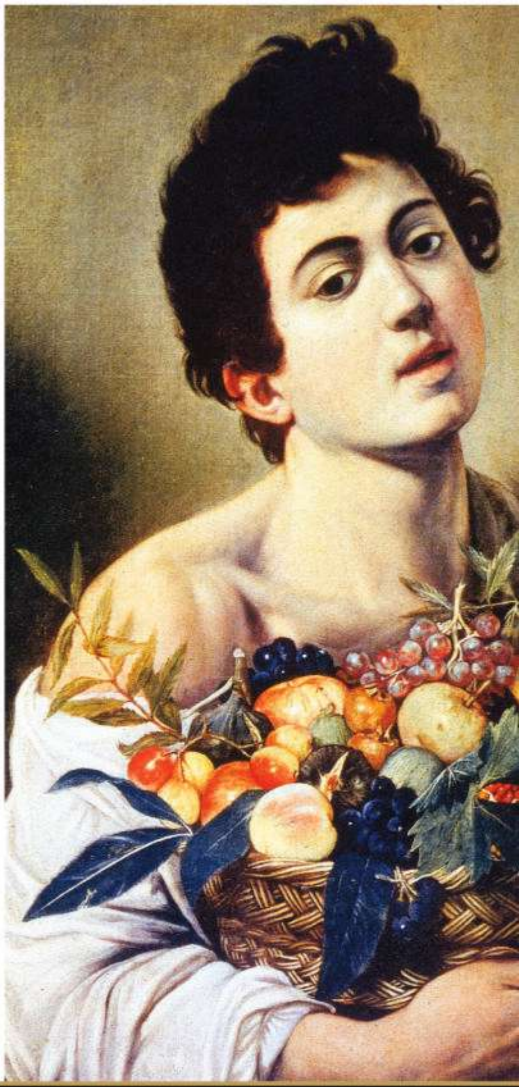

The only portrait of Caravaggio by another artist is this chalk piece by Ottavio Leoni

As Caravaggio painted and whored his way around Rome, his personal life was almost as dark as the shades he mixed for his canvases. In a society where honour was everything and reputation was a matter of life and death, the members of the artistic community were volatile, thought to be driven crazy by their potent painting materials. Stories of sabotage penetrated artistic circles, and instances of badmouthing other artists were taken very seriously. Caravaggio, being an adamant and ambitious personality as well as a bit of a hot-head, was never afraid to enter the fray, letting his rivals know what he thought of them and – sometimes very literally – tearing a strip out of anyone who dared do the same to him. Where some scores were settled with violent trysts in the street (Caravaggio once ambushed and stabbed a critic in the back), others were settled on canvas, as Caravaggio decided to outdo his rivals in paint.

By 1598, Caravaggio had made a name for himself in the artistic community and as a swaggering miscreant. He was known to cavort around with a rowdy bunch of other artists who all lived by the motto 'nec spe, nec metu' – 'without hope, without fear'. Caravaggio and his cronies were known to dress pompously, like knights and noblemen, and cruise the piazzas by day, start fights and frequent the whorehouses by night, then pick more fights before picking up a woman. Caravaggio often used his prostitutes as models, painting their likeness in exchange for other favours. The dark-haired beauty Fillide Melandroni became his favourite, taking a leading role in at least three of his paintings. Perhaps it was her violent nature he was drawn to, as Caravaggio had taken to openly carrying a sword for which he was routinely arrested



**ABOVE RIGHT** Caravaggio's *Judith Beheading Holofernes* features the courtesan, Fillide Melandroni, who modelled for some of his paintings. She appears here as Judith



**RIGHT** *Boy With A Basket Of Fruit* is one of Caravaggio's earliest works and was painted c.1593

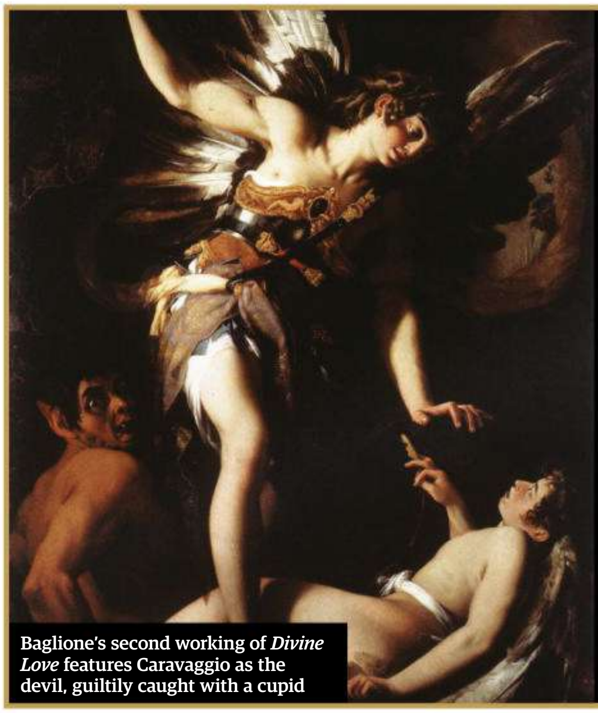
**FAR RIGHT** Caravaggio's art, as well as his lifestyle, caused controversy, with *The Death Of The Virgin* being rejected by the church

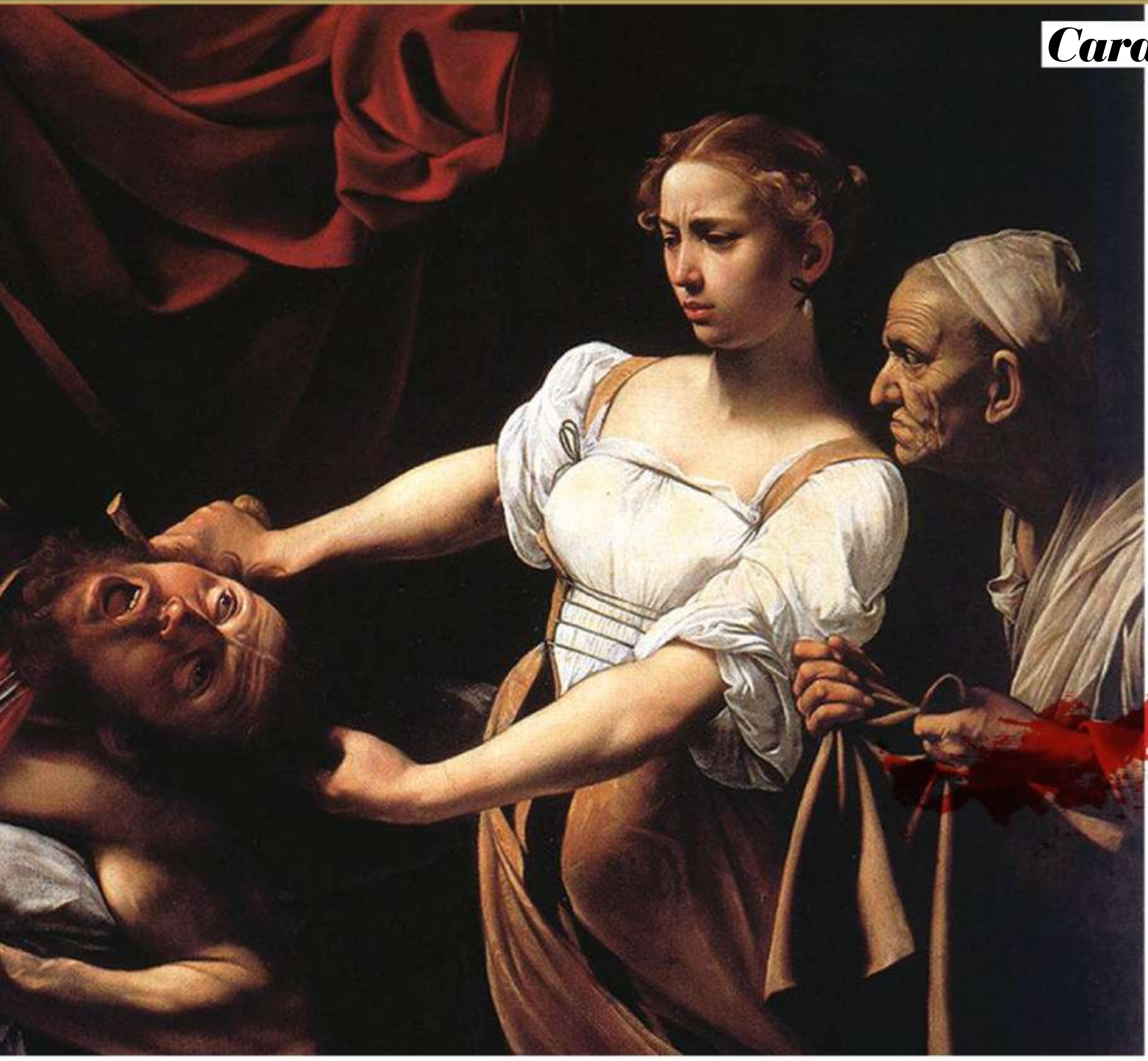
## Rivals in paint

### Caravaggio and nemesis artist Giovanni Baglione were embroiled in a high-stakes war that took place on canvas

Italian painter Giovanni Baglione was intensely jealous of Caravaggio's success. Fuelled by his envy, in 1602 he painted a picture to rival and openly slur Caravaggio at an annual exhibition. Baglione then took this further by repainting the scene *Divine Love* with Caravaggio's unmistakable features in the face of the devil, outwardly accusing him of sodomy.

Caravaggio waited to retaliate, and in 1603 he circulated lewd and sexual poems about Baglione across Rome, giving him a nickname that translates to 'Jonny Baggage' or 'Jonny Testicle'. The artists' feud would continue, with Baglione even accusing Caravaggio of hiring an assassin. However, after Caravaggio's death, it was Baglione who was one of the artist's first biographers, filling his work in part with truths and in part with his own personal musings of the artist's shortcomings.


Baglione's second working of *Divine Love* features Caravaggio as the devil, guiltily caught with a cupid



24 April 1604

## Food Fight!

### Rome restaurant left reeling as artist paints with food

Renowned bad boy of baroque Caravaggio was arrested on 24 April 1604 for causing a ruckus in a restaurant. Witnesses say the revered Roman took almighty umbrage at artichokes that were not cooked to his taste. "I told him to smell them," the assaulted waiter said, at which point Caravaggio proceeded to fling the plate at the man's face.

1 September 1605

## REVENGE PLOT UNCOVERED

### Caravaggio hurls stones at landlady's house

Once again Rome's red-blooded delinquent has hit the headlines, this time for abusing the trust and kind nature of his hardworking landlady. Prudentia Bruni, who owns artist Caravaggio's current dwelling, had her own house pelted with stones as the painter flew into a rage when she exercised her right to lock him out because the degenerate tenant owed her rent.

04 May 1598

## Painting with blood?

### Celebrity artist caught with illegal weapon

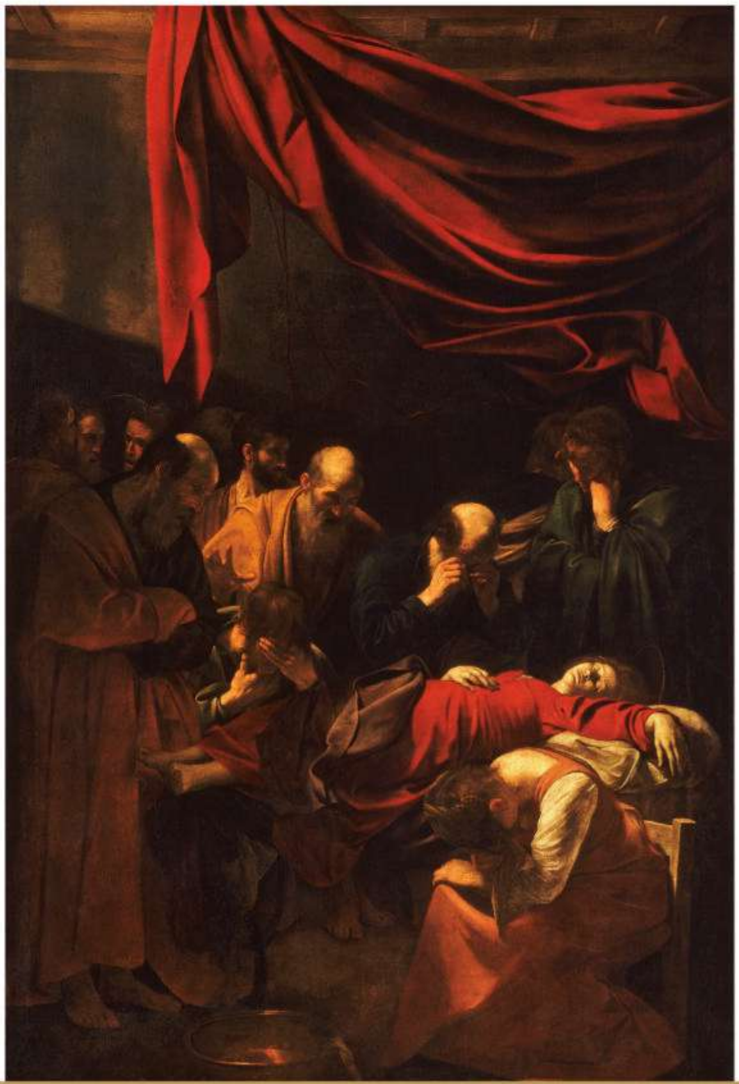
Highly strung artist Caravaggio evidently deems himself above the law. The latest police report states that he was caught at 3am on 4 May 1598, carrying a weapon for which he had no licence. What does a painter need with armament, when canvas is his only battleground and his paintbrush is his sword?

19 October 1604

## The artful dodgers of the law

### Painter's crew is banged up

Michelangelo de Caravaggio, Rome's very own lush with a paintbrush, has been arrested yet again, along with three other members of his infamous group of misfits and thugs. This time the offenders were remanded into police custody for viciously throwing stones and hurling lewd insults at the protectors of our great city.

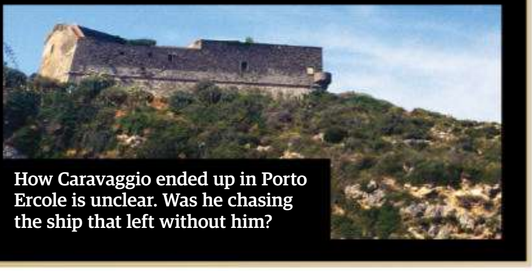


# Who killed Caravaggio?

## With no corpse, the artist's demise is cloaked in mystery yet reeks of murder

After years of full-on baroque 'n' roll in Rome culminating in the murder of a member of a dangerous family, there were a fair few people who had it in for the disgraced painter. There were just as many theories as to how he met his end. We know that he was aged 38 when he died somewhere on his journey from Naples to Rome, but we don't know where, what happened to his body, whether he was murdered, and if so, who ended the artist's life.

The long list of people who wanted Caravaggio dead included the Knights of Malta, the pope and other notable Italian families. Some even believe that his own paints poisoned him. Other reports, such as the one from the boatman who was carrying his paintings, say that he was taken ill. In reality, it was most likely the Knights of Malta who delivered the deathblow. Caravaggio was attacked viciously when he visited the Cerriglio brothel in Naples, in October 1609. He was slashed across the face – a wound of shame known as a sfregio on the Italian streets. This wound would not have healed, and so, as Caravaggio made his final journey from Naples to Rome, perhaps chasing his belongings on an errant ship off Porto Ercole, his wounds most likely got the better of him. Despite some claims, his body has never been 100% identified.



How Caravaggio ended up in Porto Ercole is unclear. Was he chasing the ship that left without him?

(he required a license but had none) but was always acquitted when he dropped the name of his employer.

It was his friends in high places that elevated Caravaggio's self-importance. He knew that his talent was revered, and he also knew that this appreciation of his work would mean that the powers that be could undo any of his wrongs and get him pardoned for his crimes. On one such occasion, Caravaggio was sued for libel by rival painter Giovanni Baglione and consequently imprisoned. The charges were then elevated after an accusation of sodomy – an act punishable by death. However, on 25 September 1603, he was miraculously freed from jail, bailed on guarantee from the French ambassador. Although by this point he had accepted a new patronage with the powerful Mattei family, it was likely his old friend Cardinal del Monte had a hand in his release.

Following this recent brush with the law, life got slowly worse for Caravaggio. He was still painting, but he was falling out of favour and being drawn deeper into criminal activity. Some say it was the rejection of *The Death of the Virgin* that sent him spiralling. The painting was a commission by a Vatican law official and depicted the mortal remains of Mary without any religious iconography typical of the time. It was seen as an all-too raw and realistic representation of the mother of Christ and so the clergy deemed it unworthy of the church. .

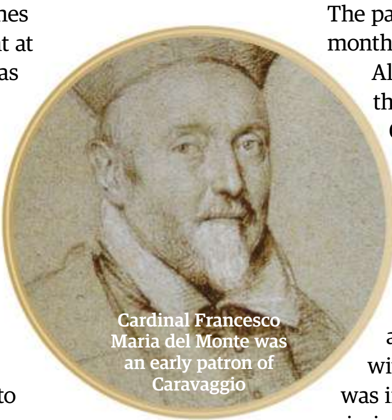
> "He was exiled and made a 'bando capitale', meaning anyone in the Papal States was within their rights to kill him and take his head back to Rome"

Caravaggio was arrested and incarcerated repeatedly, having been caught throwing rocks at policemen and also partaking in a bit of light 'door shaming'. This was a strange practice where men would approach the houses of women who had spurned them in the dead of night and throw insults, stones and sometimes blood and excrement at their doors. Evidently, Caravaggio was keen to show the lady who declined his advances the kind of refined and elegant man she had turned down. He was also taken to trial for attacking a Vatican notary from behind, and even accused of being a pimp among many other scandalous denunciations.

We are able to gain such a rich and detailed look into the sordid and crazy life of Caravaggio thanks to the incredibly detailed archives of the Roman police, or sbirri. Each account of Caravaggio's wrongdoings and altercations with the law was painstakingly recorded in handwritten script, providing a timeline of his various misdemeanours and their corresponding lucky escapes. However, Caravaggio's luck was about to run out.

The undoing of Michelangelo Merisi de Caravaggio began on 28 May 1606. Official documents say he attended a match of pallacorda, a tennis-like game popular at the time. However, no pallacorda was to be played – this was just a ruse to cover up the fact that it was a duel between Caravaggio and Ranuccio Tomassoni – a well-known pimp that controlled his favourite courtesan, Fillide Melandroni. Duelling was illegal and punishable by death. Whether they were fighting over her, territory, or something else, we will never know for sure. But what is clear is that Caravaggio managed to incapacitate Tomassoni, and using his 1.2-metre-long duelling sword, attempted to castrate his opponent. Lacking the skill to accomplish this ambitious butchery, Caravaggio instead stabbed him in the femoral artery and left Tomassoni to bleed to death.

After taking a life, Caravaggio fled. He was exiled and made a 'bando capitale', meaning anyone in the Papal States was within their rights to kill him and take his head back to Rome to claim a handsome reward. Outlawed, he absconded to Naples and sought protection with the Colonna family, who had ties with his late mother. It was here that he painted *David with the Head of Goliath*. Goliath's head is yet another self-portrait of Caravaggio, almost as if he was taunting the authorities that his head was still firmly on his shoulders. The painter stayed in Naples for nine months before moving on to Malta.



Cardinal Francesco Maria del Monte was an early patron of Caravaggio

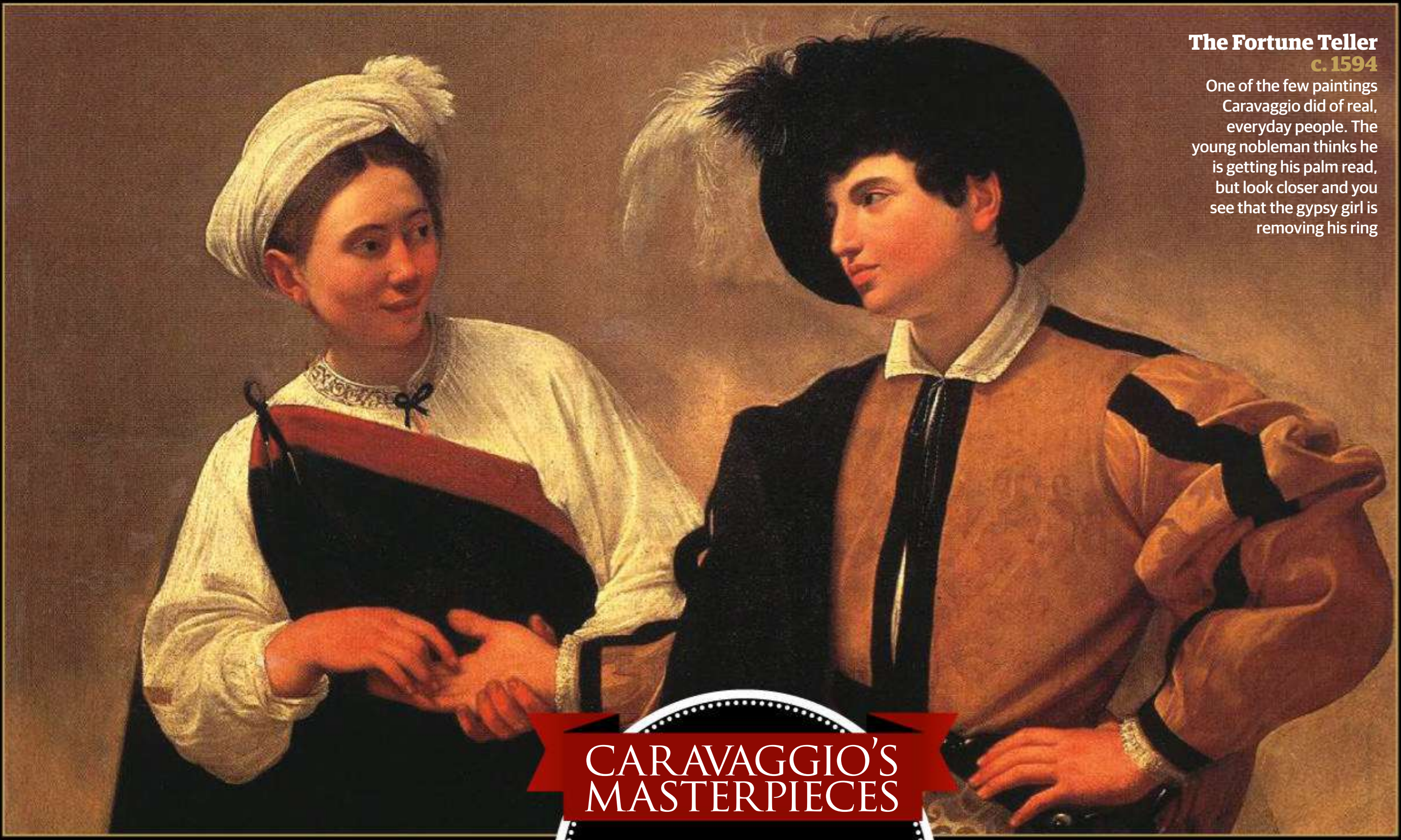
Although outlawed and debased, there was still some of the swaggering Caravaggio left intact, as when in Malta he was keen to join the Knights of Saint John (also known as the Knights of Malta), a holy chivalric order dating back to the Crusades. As an accomplished swordsman, he fitted the brief well, and after impressing the knights with a portrait of their leader, he was inducted into the order despite his criminal record. This safety was short lived, however, as in true Caravaggio style he fled after an undocumented altercation. Some believe it was a bust-up between the painter and some knights; some believe it was sexually motivated. Either way, Caravaggio was on the run once more having been de-frocked from the Knights of Malta in absentia.

From Malta, he briefly stayed in Sicily – where he was welcomed as a celebrity artist – before journeying to Naples with the view to travelling back to Rome to receive a papal pardon for his crimes. Sadly, he would never make it that far and would die a criminal.

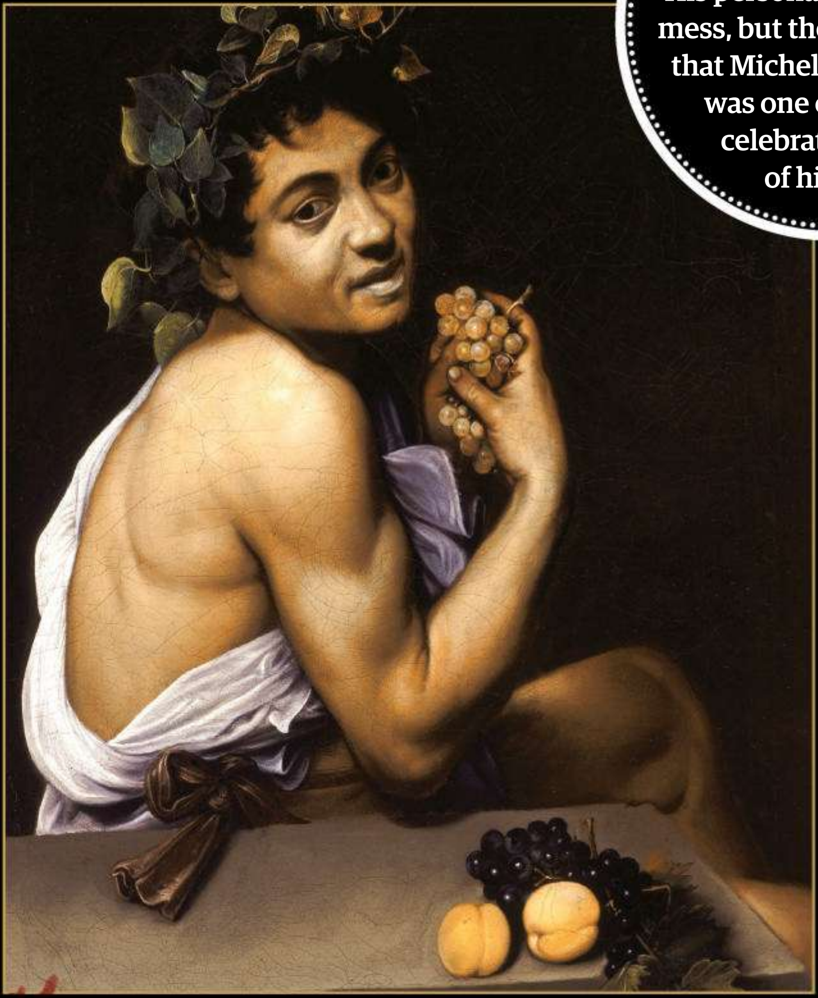
The life of Michelangelo Merisi de Caravaggio, with its deep, cavernous shadows and amazing, illuminating bright spots that mirrored the startling chiaroscuro of his own masterpieces, would come to an end on his final journey back to Rome.

# CARAVAGGIO'S MASTERPIECES

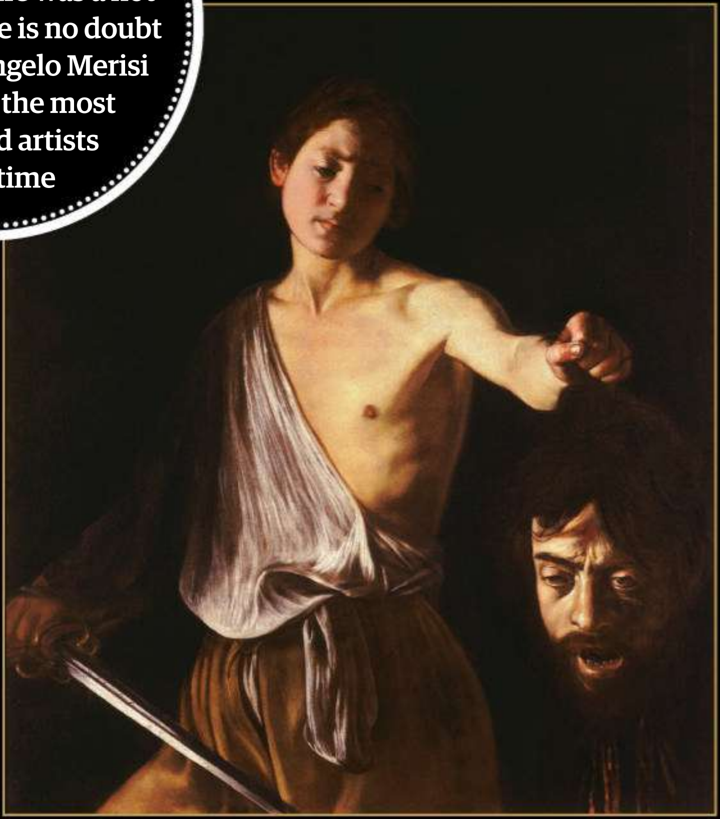
His personal life was a hot mess, but there is no doubt that Michelangelo Merisi was one of the most celebrated artists of his time



**The Fortune Teller**
c. 1594
One of the few paintings Caravaggio did of real, everyday people. The young nobleman thinks he is getting his palm read, but look closer and you see that the gypsy girl is removing his ring

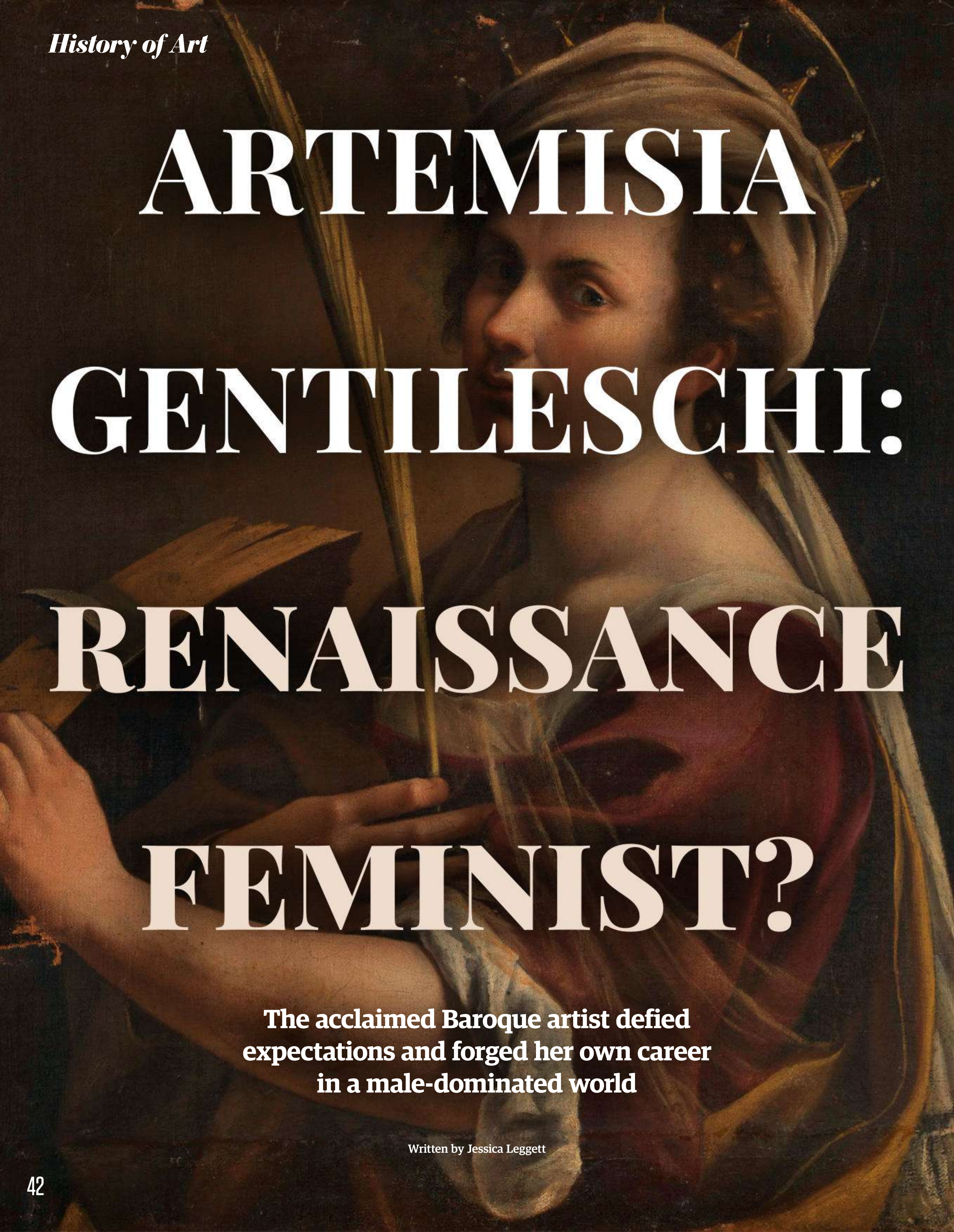


**Self Portrait as Bacchus**
c.1593
Caravaggio depicts himself as Bacchus, the god of wine, but with a difference. In this painting, he is sick: his lips are a bluish hue and his skin is sallow and yellow



**David With the Head of Goliath**
c.1606
Thought to have been painted in reaction to his criminal acts and sentencing in Rome, David holds up the head of Goliath, whose features show a striking resemblance to Caravaggio himself

© Getty Images



# ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI: RENAISSANCE FEMINIST?

**The acclaimed Baroque artist defied expectations and forged her own career in a male-dominated world**

Written by Jessica Leggett

**The most celebrated female painter of the 17th century, Artemisia Gentileschi's art was internationally renowned and collected by notable patrons such as King Philip IV of Spain.** Through her paintings, she highlighted the oppression and injustice women faced living in a patriarchal society, giving female figures the power and agency that had been ignored by other artists.

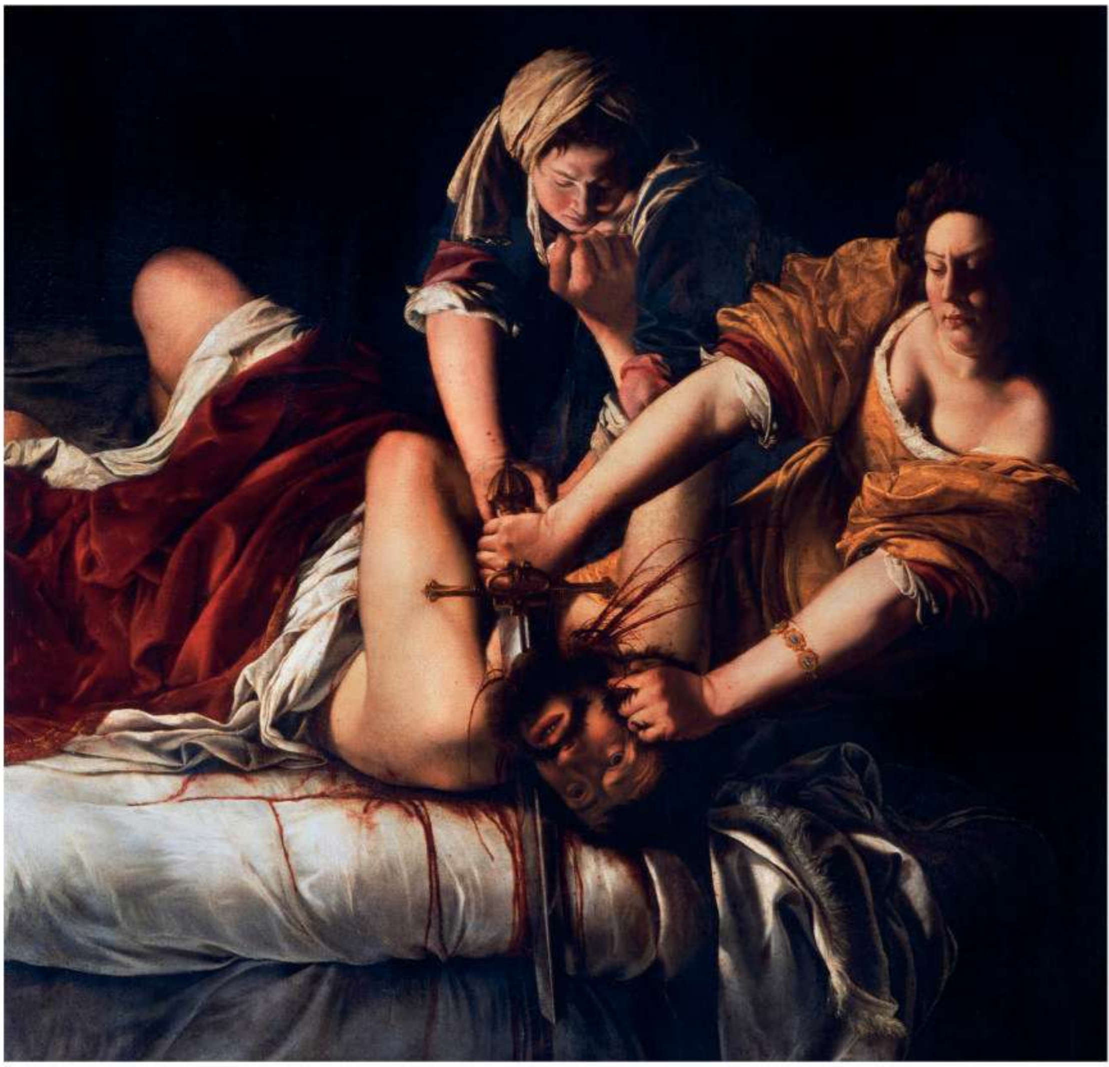
Gentileschi was born in Rome in 1593, the only daughter of Orazio Gentileschi, a painter, and Prudentia Montoni. Her mother died when she was just 12 years old and Gentileschi was sheltered by her father, who rarely allowed her to leave the house.

Orazio taught his daughter how to paint and she quickly showed more aptitude for it than her brothers. Her father's painting style was influenced by the work of his associate and friend, the renowned artist Caravaggio, known for his dynamic use of chiaroscuro, the juxtaposition of light and dark. This, in turn, influenced Gentileschi's own style.

In 1610, she produced her earliest known signed painting, *Susanna and the Elders*. Depicting a scene from the *Book of Susanna*, the painting illustrates an uncomfortable Susanna as she tries to avoid the lecherous attentions of two men while bathing. Many artists had painted this scene before Gentileschi, showing Susanna through the male gaze either unaware of the lewd men or being flirtatious towards them. As for Gentileschi, she focused on Susanna's perspective and her obvious distress at being harassed by the men.

The following year, 17-year-old Gentileschi was raped by the artist Agostino Tassi in her family home. An acquaintance and colleague of her father, Tassi had been hired to teach Gentileschi drawing and perspective. After the attack, Tassi – almost twice her age – promised to marry Gentileschi and they had an affair. When he failed to deliver on his promise, an outraged Orazio pressed charges against Tassi for damaging his family's reputation, demanding that he either marry his daughter or pay for her dowry.

A trial was held in March 1612 and it lasted for seven months, gripping everyone in Rome. Thanks to surviving documentation of the trial, we know that the judge had Gentileschi tortured while providing her testimony to ensure that she was telling the truth. Cords were wrapped and tightened around her fingers – a method that could have broken them – but Gentileschi was composed and resilient, maintaining her honesty. While undergoing torture in the courtroom, she defiantly faced Tassi and declared "This is the ring that you give me and these are your promises."



2x © Alamy

**ABOVE** *Judith Slaying Holofernes* was painted by Gentileschi between 1612-13

**LEFT** Gentileschi's *Self-Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria* was only discovered in 2017

> "Her depictions were unique, portraying these women in a powerful and yet sympathetic light, rather than as passive objects"

As part of her harrowing testimony, itself a rare example of a woman speaking out against oppression, Gentileschi stated that she "scratched his face and pulled his hair" while trying to defend herself. During the trial, Tassi claimed that Gentileschi was a loose woman and at one point he even asserted he was already married – but this may have been a dubious attempt to avoid marrying Gentileschi.

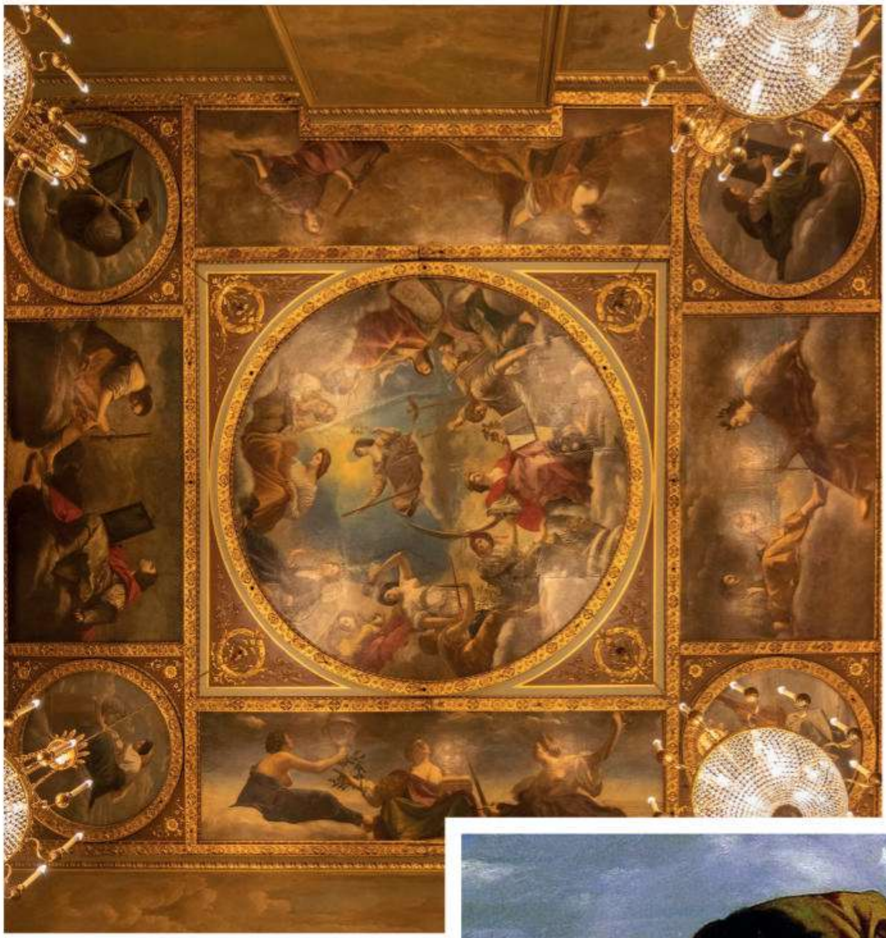
Tassi was eventually convicted of raping Gentileschi and sentenced to be exiled from Rome for five years. Yet he did not leave the city nor did he hide, and he was only exiled a year later after he committed another crime. Meanwhile, despite her victory, Gentileschi's reputation had been left in tatters and she was widely seen in Rome as a promiscuous woman.

The day after Tassi's sentence was announced, she was married off to Pierantonio Stiattesi, a fellow artist, and the couple quickly relocated to Florence. Over the next few years, Gentileschi and her husband had five children together, although sadly only one of them – their daughter Prudentia – survived into adulthood.

With her fresh start, Gentileschi built up her career. Surrounded by other artists and court painters in Florence, her creativity flourished and she was able to develop her own art style, away from her father's influence. A popular figure at the royal court, she established relationships with intellectuals and artists such as Cristofano Allori and Galileo, and she enjoyed the patronage of the powerful and wealthy House of Medici. Gentileschi's popularity amongst intellectual circles was even more remarkable considering that she had received no formal education as a child, and was essentially illiterate when she arrived in Florence.

It has been argued that Gentileschi's success was partly due to the fact that she was unusual, at a time when female professional painters were rare, and so she was interesting to patrons. Also, she offered something different to the other male artists of her day. Like them, she painted mythical and biblical female protagonists but her depictions were unique, portraying these women in a powerful and yet sympathetic light, rather than as passive objects.

Gentileschi was also known for her self-portraits and she created a series of them in Florence, with her image becoming popular among collectors. Only a few examples of these survive today, including her *Self-Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria*. Catherine was a female martyr, who was tortured on a spiked wheel by Roman Emperor Maxentius for refusing to renounce Christianity, with the wheel eventually breaking. In her painting, Gentileschi as Catherine holds the broken wheel to symbolise how she overcame her torture, likely in reference to the rape trial.



**LEFT** *An Allegory of Peace and the Arts*, painted by Orazio and possibly Artemisia

3x © Alamy

Undoubtedly, one of Gentileschi's most iconic paintings is *Judith Slaying Holofernes*. Judith is an Israelite who pretends to seduce Holofernes before decapitating him, and a woman whom Gentileschi painted more than once. Inspired by Caravaggio's own version of the scene, her painting invokes intense realism with Judith and her maidservant cutting off Holofernes' head, while blood spurts out of his neck.

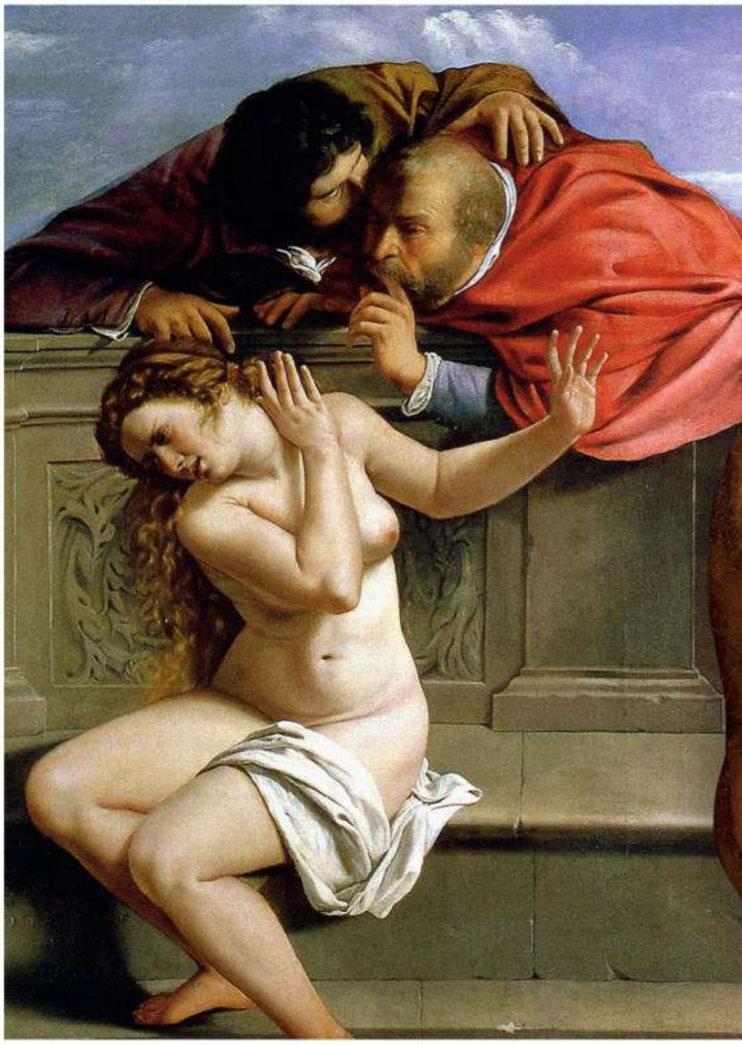
The painting is commonly seen as an expression of Gentileschi's anger and desire for revenge after she was raped, with Judith representing her and Holofernes representing Tassi. However, this view is debated and in recent years, scholars have considered how the painting portrays a reversal of the traditional power dynamic between men and women. Here, Judith and her maidservant are actively in control, working together to kill a man who is physically stronger than them. It is just one of Gentileschi's many paintings that focus on strong, capable women and depict them through the female gaze.

> **"Sadly, although Gentileschi was a celebrated artist in her lifetime, her work fell into obscurity after her death"**

Gentileschi's skill was recognised when she became the first woman to join the Accademia del Disegno, the Academy of the Arts of Drawing, in 1616. After eight years in Florence, she returned to Rome in 1620 and separated from her husband. Gentileschi continued her career, briefly moving to Venice sometime between 1626 and 1627, before settling in Naples in 1630.

Gentileschi remained in Naples for the rest of her life, aside from when she paid a visit to England in 1638 after receiving an invitation from King Charles I. Orazio had been based in England as the king's court painter since 1626 and it is thought that Gentileschi assisted her father in completing a ceiling painting at the

**BELOW** Gentileschi's painting *Susanna and the Elders*



Queen's House in Greenwich for Queen Henrietta Maria, titled *An Allegory of Peace and the Arts*.

It was during this stay in England that Gentileschi likely produced her *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting*. In allegorical works, 'Painting' was traditionally personified as a woman. Gentileschi, as a female professional artist, was therefore in a unique position to depict herself as a painter at work and to identify herself as the personification of Painting. It is a sophisticated piece and a testament to Gentileschi's abilities as an artist, as she was able to accurately paint herself in such a difficult pose.

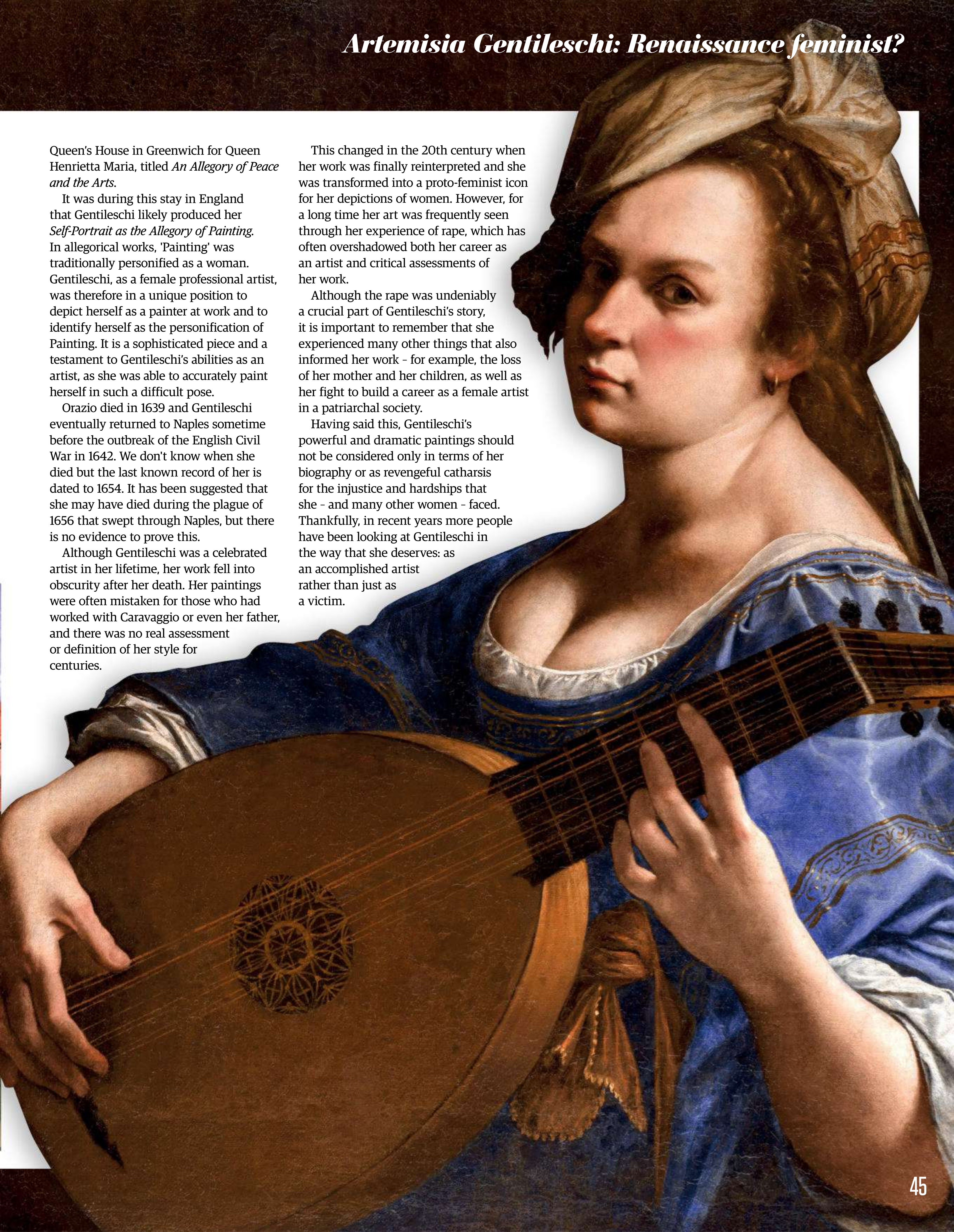
Orazio died in 1639 and Gentileschi eventually returned to Naples sometime before the outbreak of the English Civil War in 1642. We don't know when she died but the last known record of her is dated to 1654. It has been suggested that she may have died during the plague of 1656 that swept through Naples, but there is no evidence to prove this.

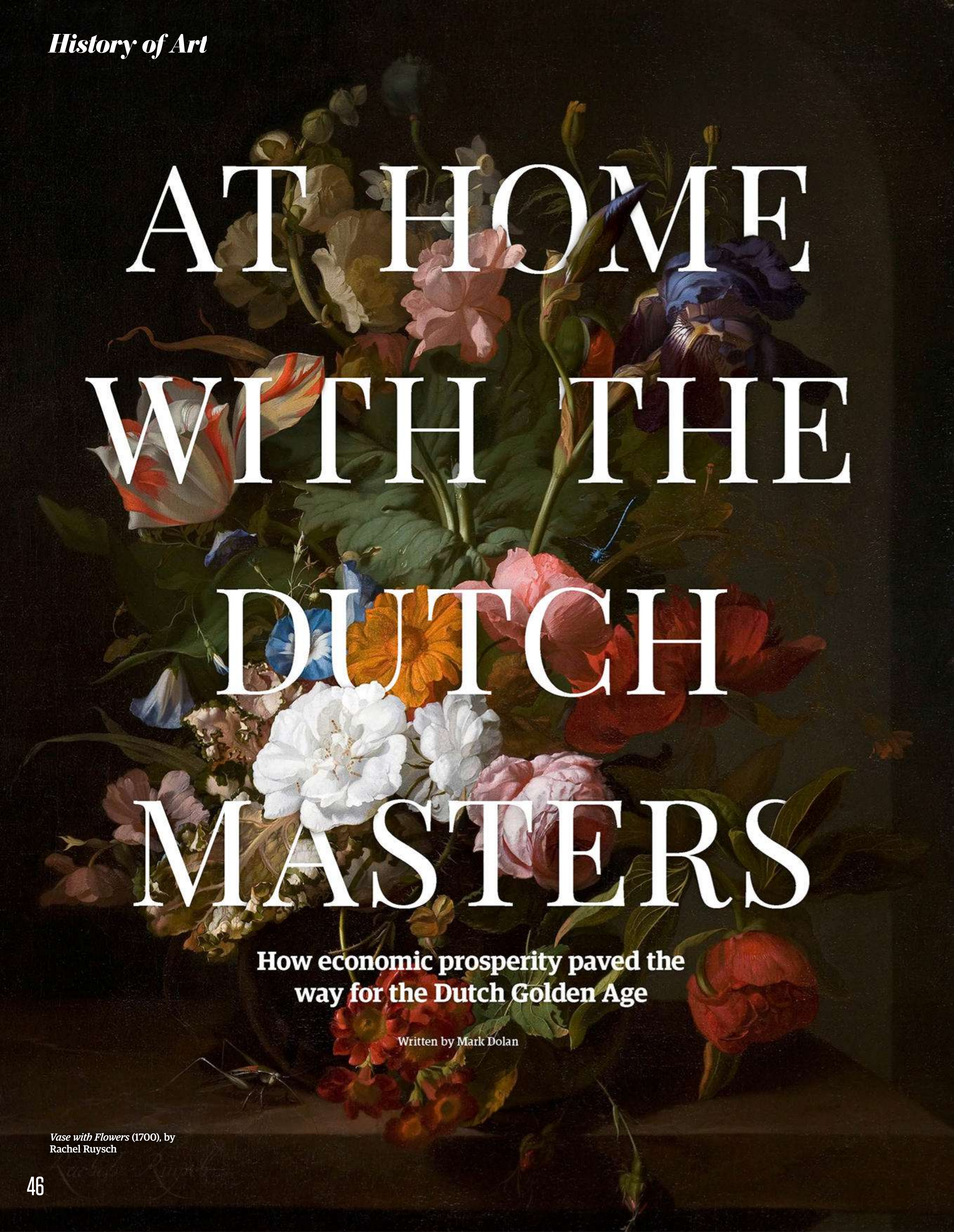
Although Gentileschi was a celebrated artist in her lifetime, her work fell into obscurity after her death. Her paintings were often mistaken for those who had worked with Caravaggio or even her father, and there was no real assessment or definition of her style for centuries.

This changed in the 20th century when her work was finally reinterpreted and she was transformed into a proto-feminist icon for her depictions of women. However, for a long time her art was frequently seen through her experience of rape, which has often overshadowed both her career as an artist and critical assessments of her work.

Although the rape was undeniably a crucial part of Gentileschi's story, it is important to remember that she experienced many other things that also informed her work – for example, the loss of her mother and her children, as well as her fight to build a career as a female artist in a patriarchal society.

Having said this, Gentileschi's powerful and dramatic paintings should not be considered only in terms of her biography or as revengeful catharsis for the injustice and hardships that she – and many other women – faced. Thankfully, in recent years more people have been looking at Gentileschi in the way that she deserves: as an accomplished artist rather than just as a victim.



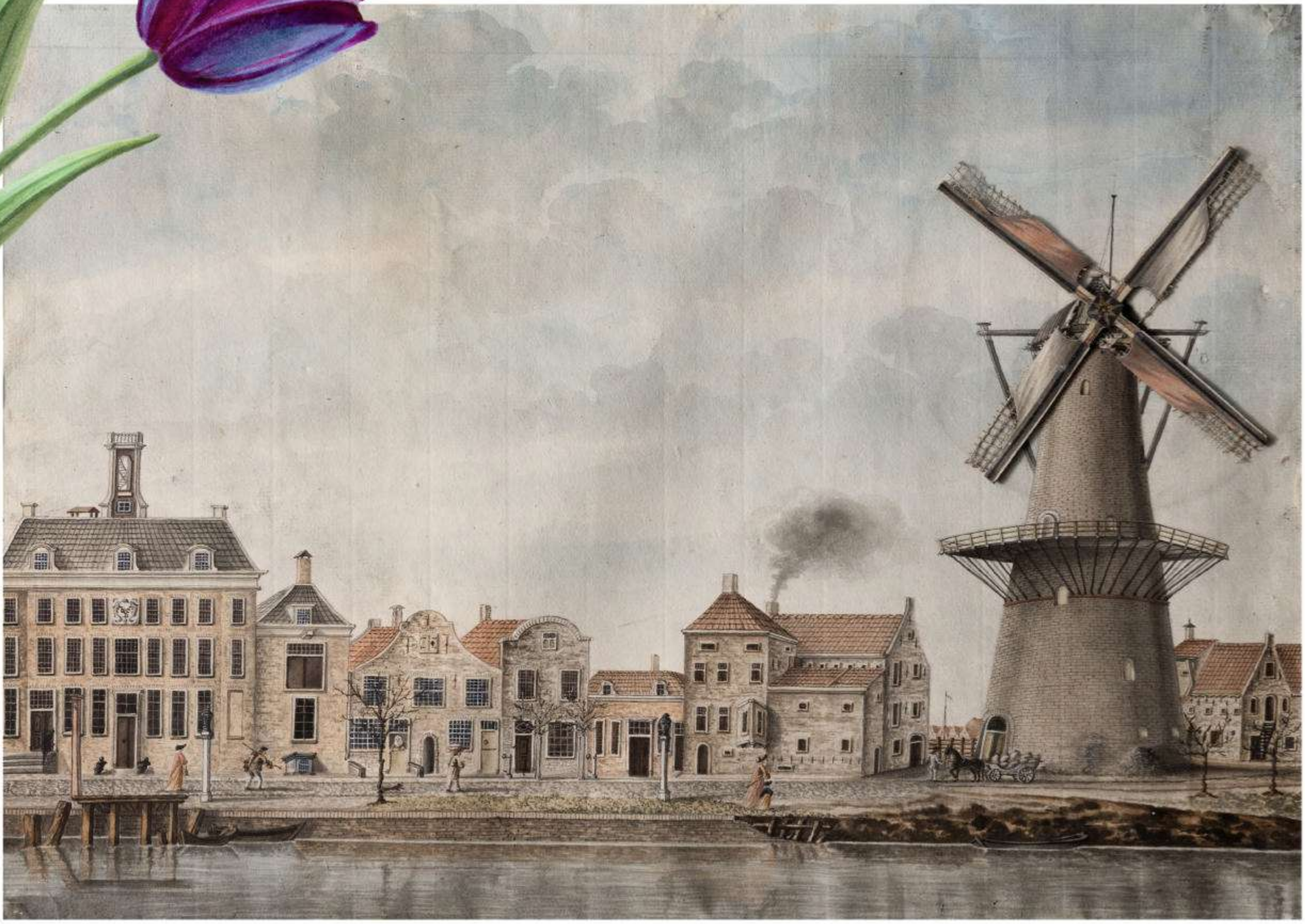


# AT HOME WITH THE DUTCH MASTERS

How economic prosperity paved the way for the Dutch Golden Age

Written by Mark Dolan

*Vase with Flowers* (1700), by Rachel Ruysch



**ABOVE** The city of Delft during the Dutch Golden Age

> “Artists could specialise, making a name for themselves in a particular style”

The Dutch Golden Age, a period of unprecedented economic prosperity in the Netherlands that spanned most of the 17th century, gave rise to a generation of artists who could only have emerged and thrived in that particular world. Although officially under the rule of Philip II of Spain, in 1579 the seven northernmost provinces of the Netherlands – Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Overijssel, Gelderland, Friesland and Groningen – formed a loose federation, the Dutch Republic, and declared their independence from the Habsburg Empire. Unlike the political structure of Spain in this period, the Dutch economy was based not on social hierarchy and hereditary wealth, but on trade and industry, allowing a wealthy middle class to emerge. Its power, too, was decentralised, with the city-states operating autonomously. At the heart of its success was the trade enterprise, the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie or VOC), which utilised the Dutch colonies in the Caribbean and East Indies, as well as those in North Africa, South Africa and Brazil, to devastating effect. The exploitative trade in ivory, gold and enslaved people facilitated the rapid growth of the Dutch economy and laid the path for the pre-existing affinity for art to flourish in a new way.

The densely populated cities of 17th-century Netherlands were filled with wealthy middle-class people keen to purchase art, and this growing demand led to a floruit in painters working in its cities. There were an estimated 650-750 painters working in the Netherlands in the mid-17th century, serving a population of around 1.5-2 million people, while in Rennaissance Italy, for example, 9 million people were keeping just 350 painters in work. While other contemporary artists worked for patrons or on commission, it was common in the Netherlands for artists to sell their works directly to the public, at a wide range of price points. This system created an open market where artists could specialise in ways that were rare in other parts of Europe, making a name for themselves in a particular style. These specialisms are some of the most significant and unique aspects of the art of the 17th-century Dutch masters, and two of the most popular were genre paintings and still lifes.

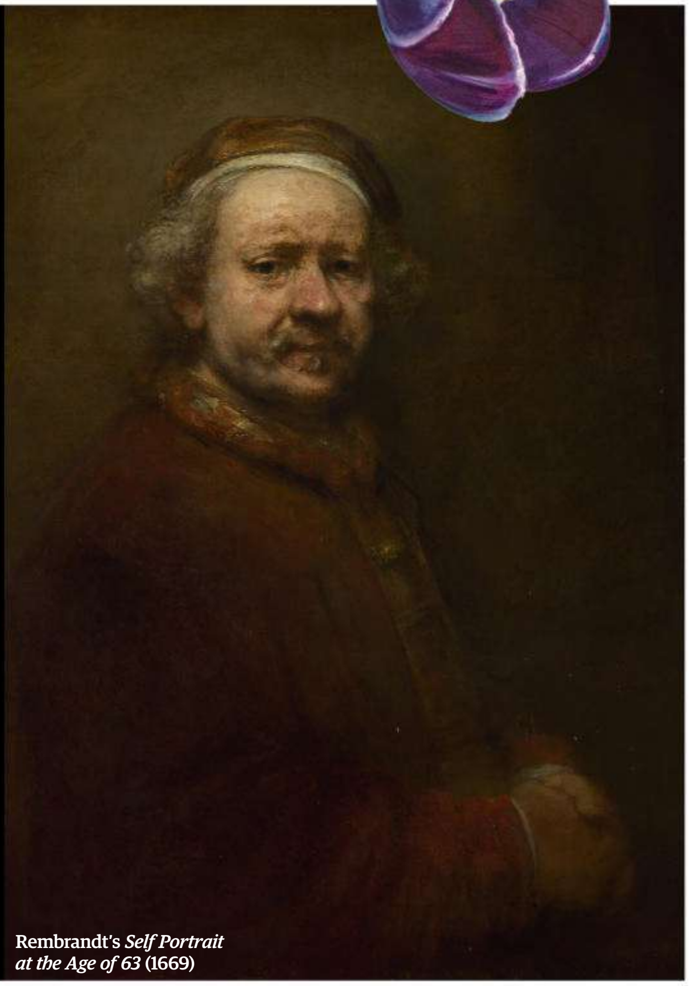
## Drawn from life

Although the idea of depicting everyday scenes of life was not new in the 17th century, having roots as far back as, for example, Iron Age Cyprus (c 675-450

## Call me Rembrandt

There are many great artists whose work is not touched on in this article, both genre artists such as Jan Steen and Maria Schalcken, as well as specialists of the still life, such as Pieter Claesz and Maria Sibylla Merian. However, it would be remiss not to mention probably the most prominent of all the Dutch Golden Age painters, Rembrandt van Rijn (who dropped the 'van Rijn' in 1632 to place himself alongside the likes of Raphael and Titian). Specialising in historical scenes and portraiture, Rembrandt consistently experimented with his technique, developing a very careful use of colour and eventually a 'loose' style of painting that enabled him to create depth and direct the eye to whichever parts of the image he desired.

Far from unappreciated in his own time, Rembrandt was famous and highly regarded in the 1630s, though financial troubles and personal scandal plagued him and he was forced to declare bankruptcy in 1656 and auction off his estate. Unlike Ruysch, whose longevity led to a comfortable and productive final few years, Rembrandt never recovered from his financial issues, living off his daughter's savings for his last years and being buried in a rented grave.



Rembrandt's *Self Portrait at the Age of 63* (1669)

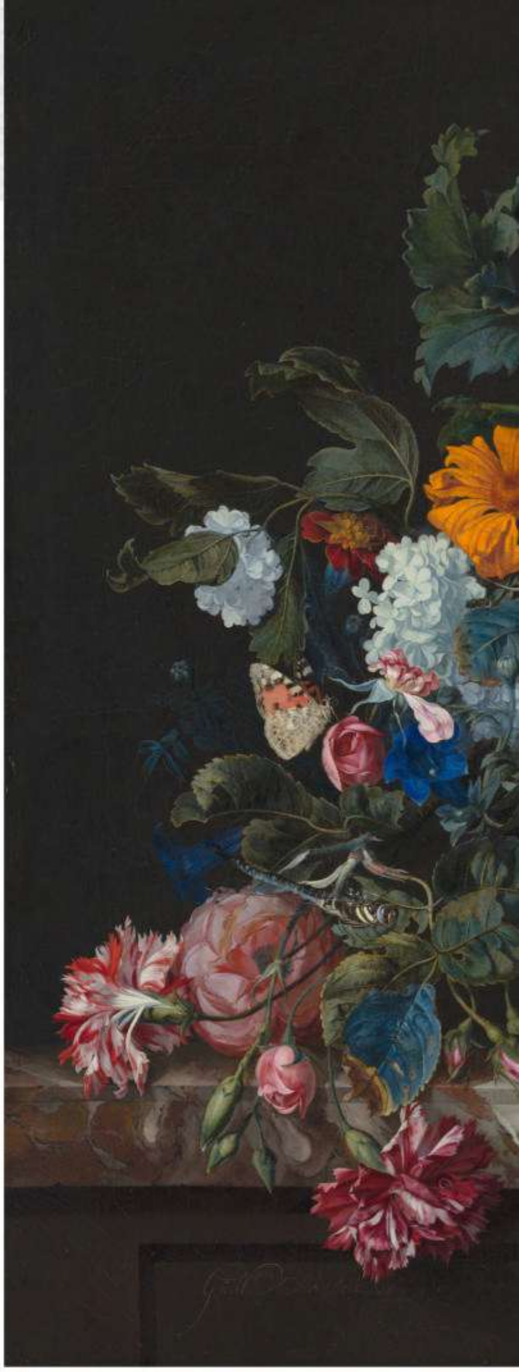
"There grew a taste for brilliantly executed paintings of a more quotidian nature"

BCE), during the Dutch Golden Age it enjoyed a major revival. The self-made businesspeople of the Netherlands were keen to find great art that reflected their lived experience, rather than the loftier subject matter of the Italian Renaissance, where paintings often showcased religious scenes or mythological figures. There soon grew a taste for brilliantly executed paintings of a more quotidian nature, now known as 'genre paintings'.

These paintings, pioneered by the likes of Frans Hals and Judith Leyster, didn't focus on named or known figures, but instead depicted generic people, such as maids, young couples, marketgoers and well-to-do middle-class men and women enjoying the fruits of their successes. Although at a basic level a genre scene can be thought of as a relatively mundane and unexciting form of artwork – as it was considered at the time by the artistic establishment throughout Europe – genre paintings not only enabled people to have art that was more intimately tied up with their actual lives, but these scenes were fertile ground for artists to add in details that were highly meaningful, often witty, sometimes boastful and occasionally rude. In Dutch society at the time, as in any culture, there were particular associations evoked by features such as professions, clothes, activities and objects, which could be played with through the use and combination of recognisable motifs.

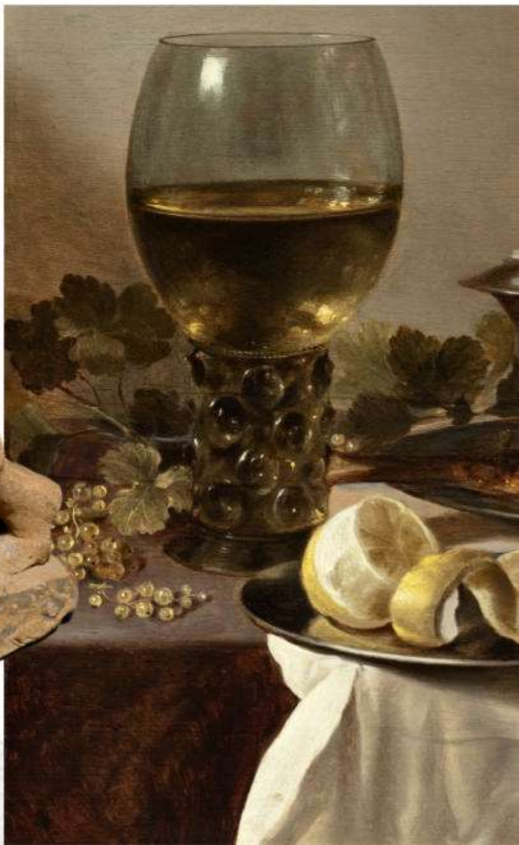
### Genre definers

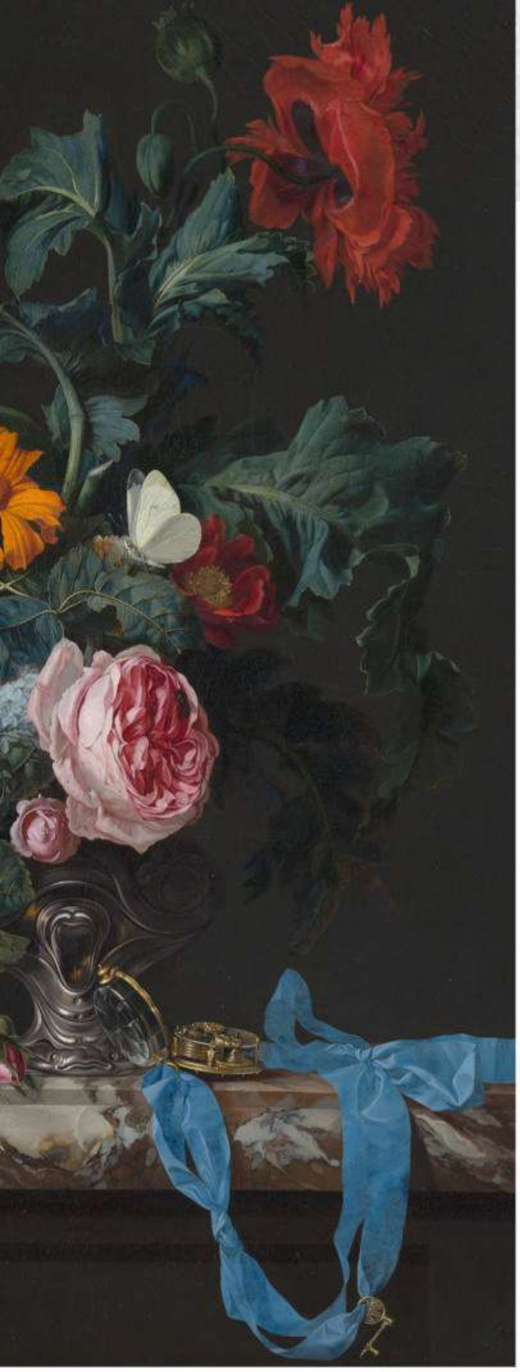
One of the most famous of the Dutch masters was Frans Hals, an artist who cut his teeth on portraiture but went on to be at the forefront of the new world of genre painting. Hals's skill in executing lively portraits

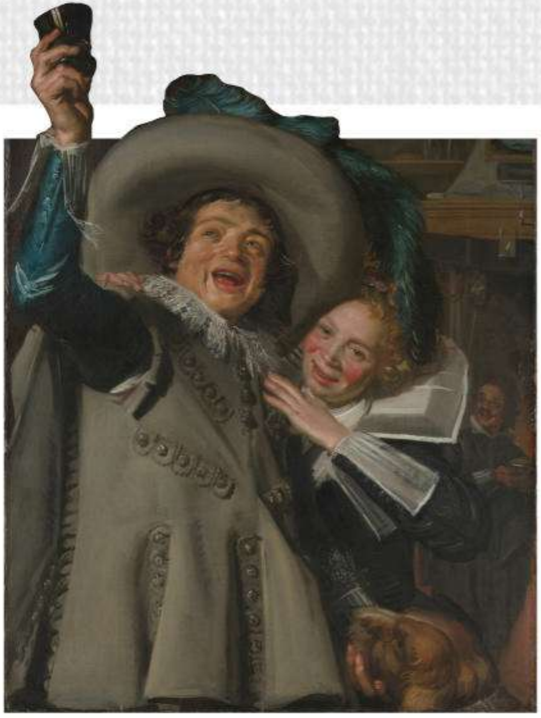


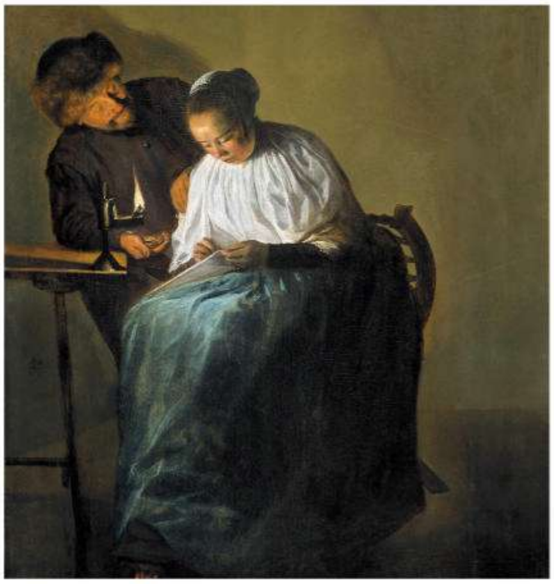
**ABOVE RIGHT** A floral still life, *Flower Still Life with a Timepiece* (1663) by Willem van Aelst, who was also Rachel Ruysch's teacher

**BELOW** A genre scene from ancient Cyprus depicting two people baking bread





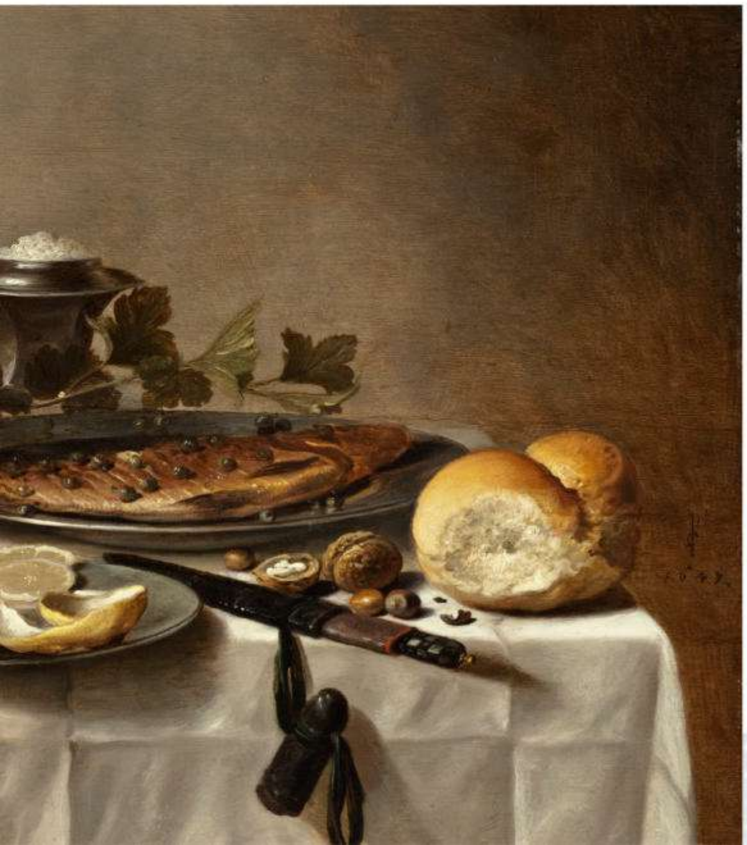




**ABOVE LEFT** Frans Hals's joyous *Young Man and Woman in an Inn* (1623)

**ABOVE RIGHT** Judith Leyster's *The Proposition* (1631)

**BELOW** *Still Life with Herring, Wine and Bread* (1647). A banquet still life by Pieter Claesz



allowed him to evoke clear associations through his genre work. In one painting, *Young Man and Woman in an Inn*, a young couple happily cavort in the hallway of a brothel – an image of youthful folly, but one that referred to the common moaning of the older generation at the time that the youth were frivolous and didn't understand the value of hard work and self-restraint. It certainly gives a timelessness to the painting!

Another major figure, and one whose paintings have often been misattributed to Hals (it is likely she was his pupil), is Judith Leyster. Leyster was a hugely successful artist in the 1620s and 1630s, making her living from her art, joining the Guild of Saint Luke in Haarlem and taking on students – something members could only do once they had established themselves as a master. One of her trademarks was her use of light, inspired by the chiaroscuro work of Caravaggio. She was not afraid to make statements in her art, and go against the norm. At the time, scenes of propositions between couples usually depicted women as being willing participants, often leading men into temptation by plying them with wine and tobacco. In Leyster's *The Proposition* (1631), however, we see a woman who is modestly dressed, somewhat uncomfortable and showing resistance to the advances of a man wanting to pay for her company.

Another influential – but not notably successful in his time – genre painter of the period is one of the Golden Age's most recognisable names: Johannes Vermeer. Perhaps best known for his tronies, Vermeer also created genre scenes, which demonstrated his mastery of light and texture and often featured women in intimate, domestic settings, whether asleep by an empty wine glass (*A Maid Asleep*) or a young woman gazing out of a window, hair covered and holding a jug, a common shorthand for purity.

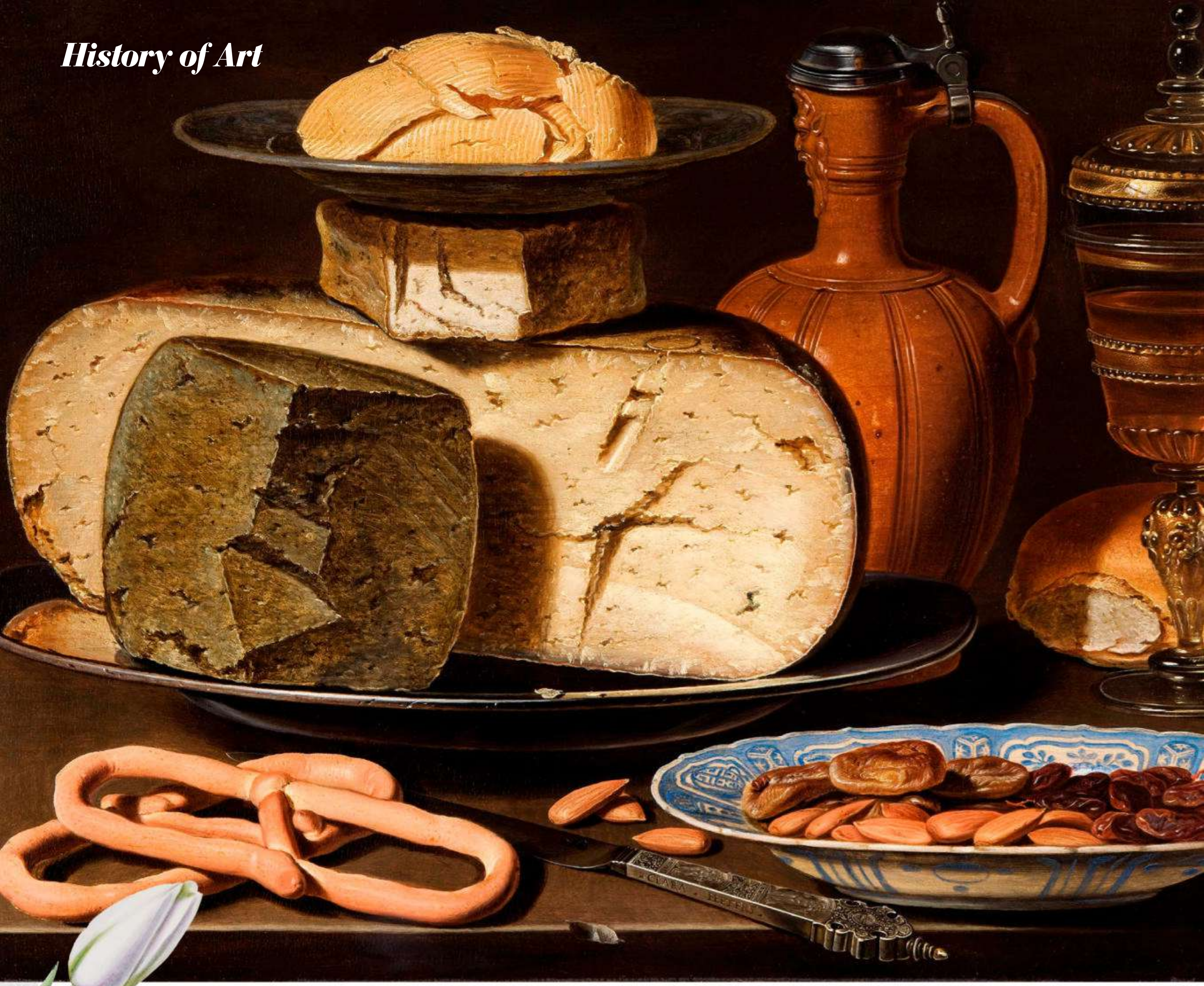
## Stop and stare

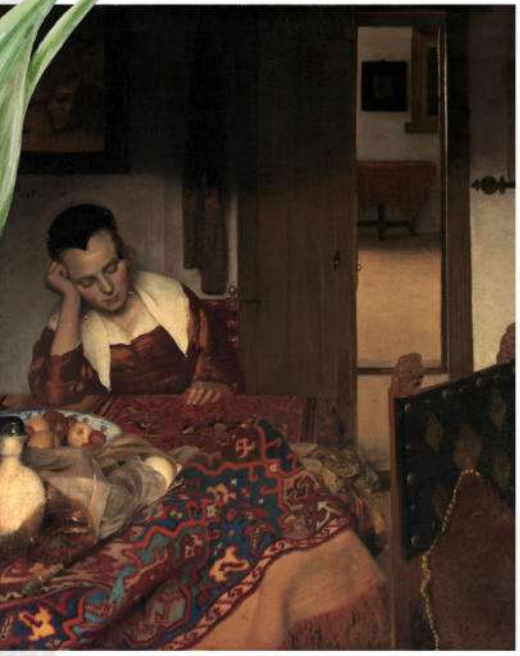
As well as active compositions of people, still lifes – detailed paintings of inanimate objects – dominated the Dutch Golden Age. This style of painting also grew out of the particular economic conditions of the region, when increasing opportunity for personal wealth and status display led to increased interest in both status objects and densely symbolic, beautiful compositions that would not only adorn a room but communicate a wealth of propagandistic information about its owner/commissioner.

Some of the most popular still lifes were floral paintings, often combining highly prized and expensive flowers with deep symbolism and skilful execution, while other popular models included banquet still lifes, involving an array of food and drink, and, in the latter half of the 17th century, pronk displays, featuring highly-prized exotic imported items such as non-native fruit, Chinese porcelain and Venetian glassware.

## Flower arrangers and table setters

Rachel Ruysch, a master whose name is less familiar than some of her male counterparts, was one of the most successful still life painters of her time. The daughter





> “Peeters was able to demonstrate her unparalleled ability to evoke different textures”

**ABOVE** *Still Life with Cheeses, Almonds and Pretzels* (1615), by Clara Peeters featuring a miniature self-portrait in the lid of the jug

**LEFT** Johannes Vermeer's *A Maid Asleep* (1656-7)

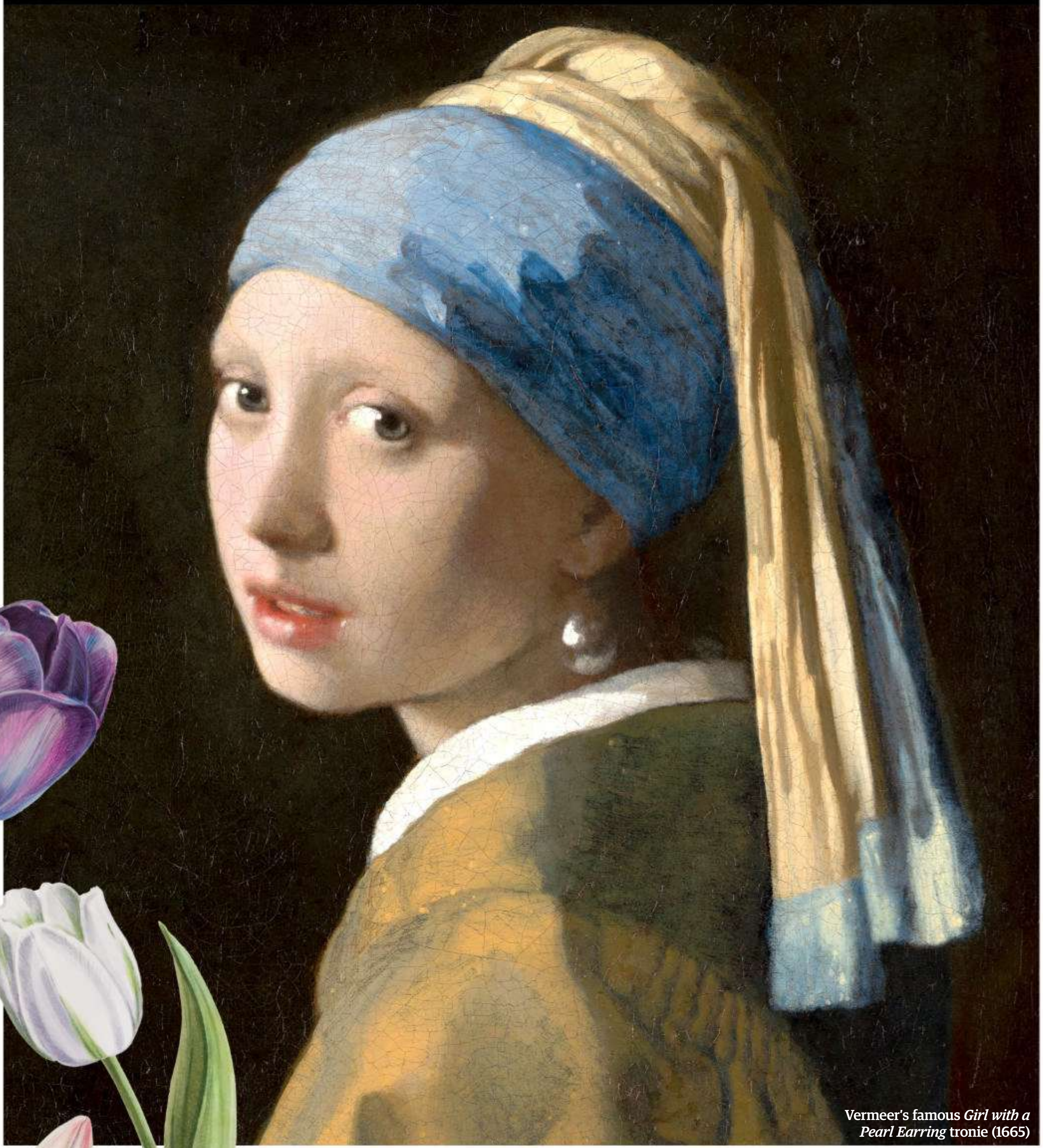
of an eminent botanist, an early interest in flowers is perhaps unsurprising, and at 15 she was apprenticed to the successful flower painter, Willem van Aelst, to hone her craft. From this point she excelled, defining her own style and achieving great repute, becoming the first female member of the Confrerie Pictura artists' society in The Hague. She also served as the court painter to Johann Wilhelm, the Elector Palatine of Bavaria, from 1708 until his death in 1716. Her reputation never declined, and she went on producing stunning works for an international clientele well into her ninth decade.

Another woman whose still lifes were both beautiful and innovative was Clara Peeters. Unfortunately little is known of Peeters' life, beyond the fact that she was one of the earliest female painters in the Netherlands to specialise in still lifes. By primarily painting banquets, where exotic objects were placed in and around food and drink, Peeters was able to demonstrate her unparalleled ability to evoke different textures. In addition to her technical skills, she was a playful painter, a trait on full display in her 1615 painting, *Still Life with Cheeses, Almonds and Pretzels*. Here she not only signed her name as an engraving along the edge of a knife, but managed to incorporate a miniature self-portrait as the reflection on the pewter lid of the earthenware jug.

## What's in a face?

Just as genre paintings could depict generalised scenes and still lifes were not necessarily based on real spreads, Dutch portraiture was also unrestricted by reality. A peculiarly Dutch-Flemish type of artwork was the tronie, Dutch for 'face' or 'expression'. These images, which to all intents and purposes can be described as portraits, differ in that their subjects didn't exist, but were creations of their painters' imaginations. In some cases, these could be for the artists to experiment with styles, expressions and combinations that were not limited by a need to be recognisable as a particular person, or they could be studies for later works incorporating multiple people. In many cases, artists would create these as masterpieces in their own right, with Vermeer and Rembrandt being two of the most prominent tronie painters. Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, for example, is a tronie that cannot be judged as simply a study or experiment, but a true work of genius.

It may be that the circumstances were simply right for these types of painting to emerge, when there was much more of a focus on symbolism, genericism and artistic ability than in other places, but regardless, the tronies were a central part of the wider Dutch Golden Age of Painting.



Vermeer's famous *Girl with a Pearl Earring* tronie (1665)

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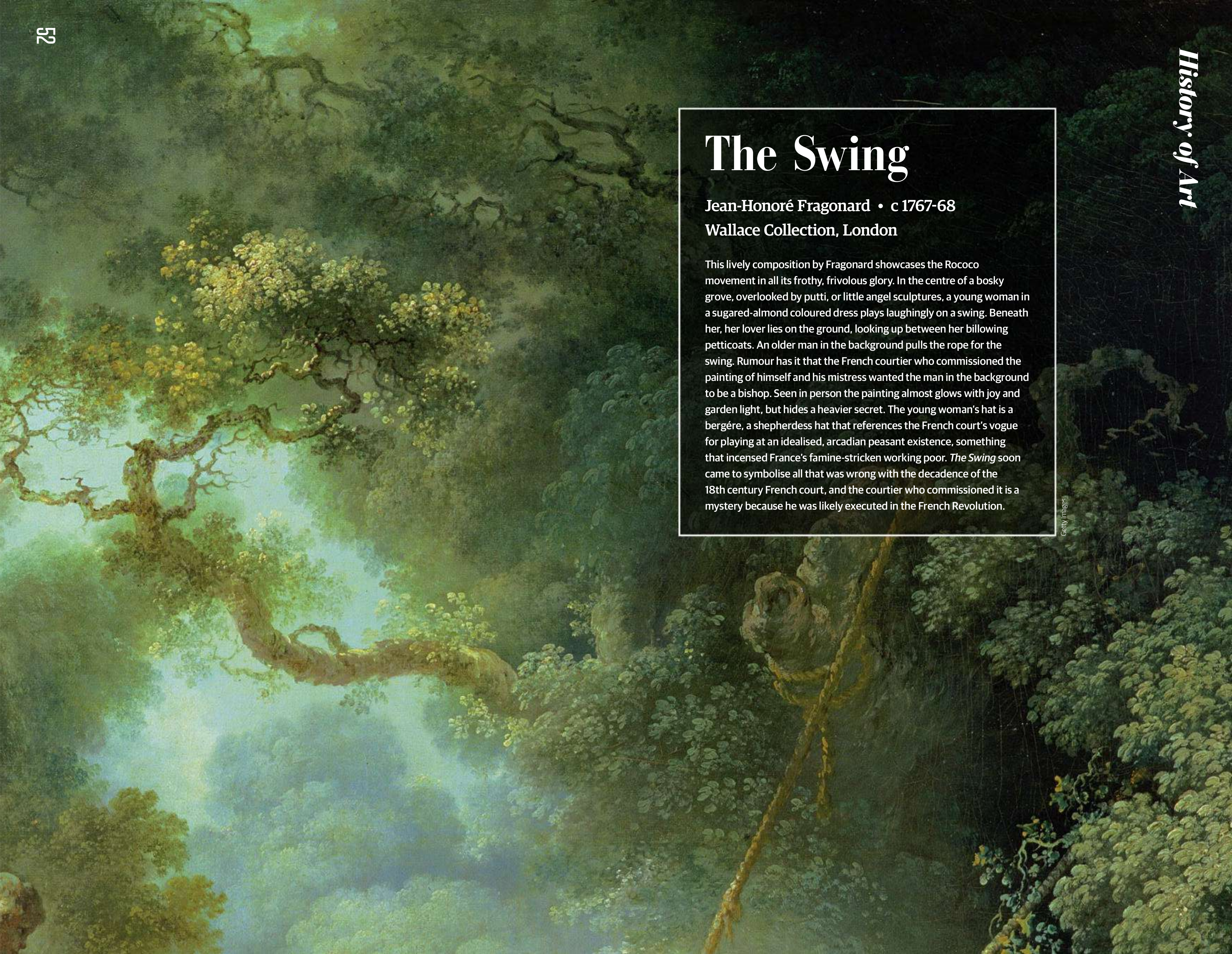


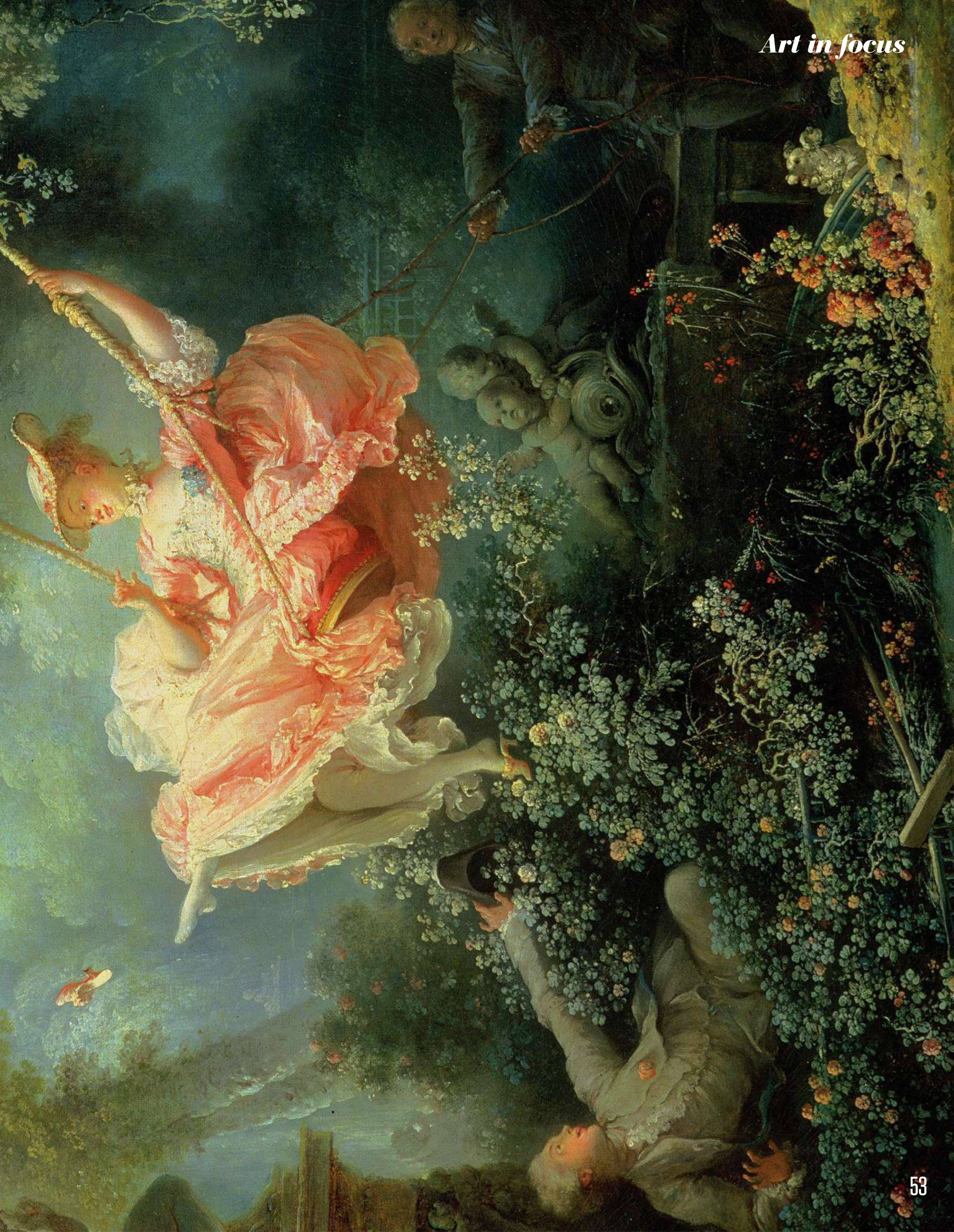
Getty Images

# The Swing

**Jean-Honoré Fragonard • c 1767-68**

**Wallace Collection, London**

This lively composition by Fragonard showcases the Rococo movement in all its frothy, frivolous glory. In the centre of a bosky grove, overlooked by putti, or little angel sculptures, a young woman in a sugared-almond coloured dress plays laughingly on a swing. Beneath her, her lover lies on the ground, looking up between her billowing petticoats. An older man in the background pulls the rope for the swing. Rumour has it that the French courtier who commissioned the painting of himself and his mistress wanted the man in the background to be a bishop. Seen in person the painting almost glows with joy and garden light, but hides a heavier secret. The young woman's hat is a bergére, a shepherdess hat that references the French court's vogue for playing at an idealised, arcadian peasant existence, something that incensed France's famine-stricken working poor. *The Swing* soon came to symbolise all that was wrong with the decadence of the 18th century French court, and the courtier who commissioned it is a mystery because he was likely executed in the French Revolution.



# ARTIST OF SATIRE

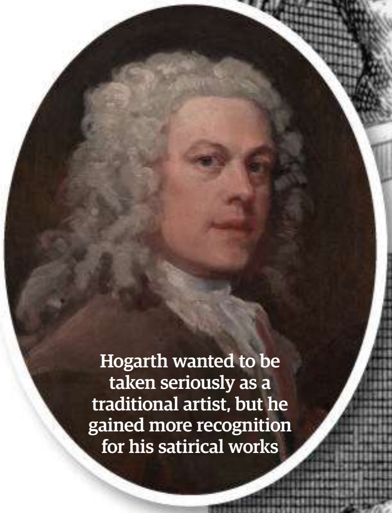
## How one of Britain's most famous artists used humour to shine a light on society's moral decay

Written by Jessica Leggett

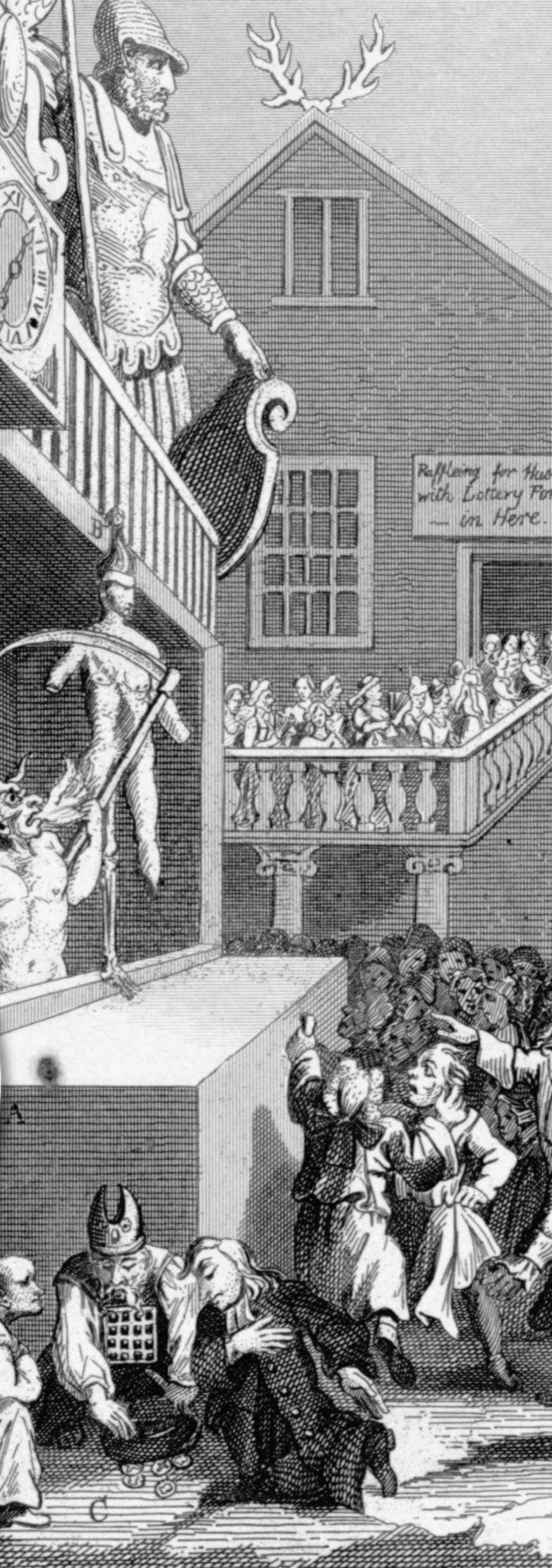
Often described as one of the greatest satirical artists of all time, painter and engraver William Hogarth was a pioneer of his generation. He is remembered for his satirical prints that commentated on the issues of moral decay and excesses of contemporary society, which have been reprinted countless times since his lifetime and are still celebrated to this day.

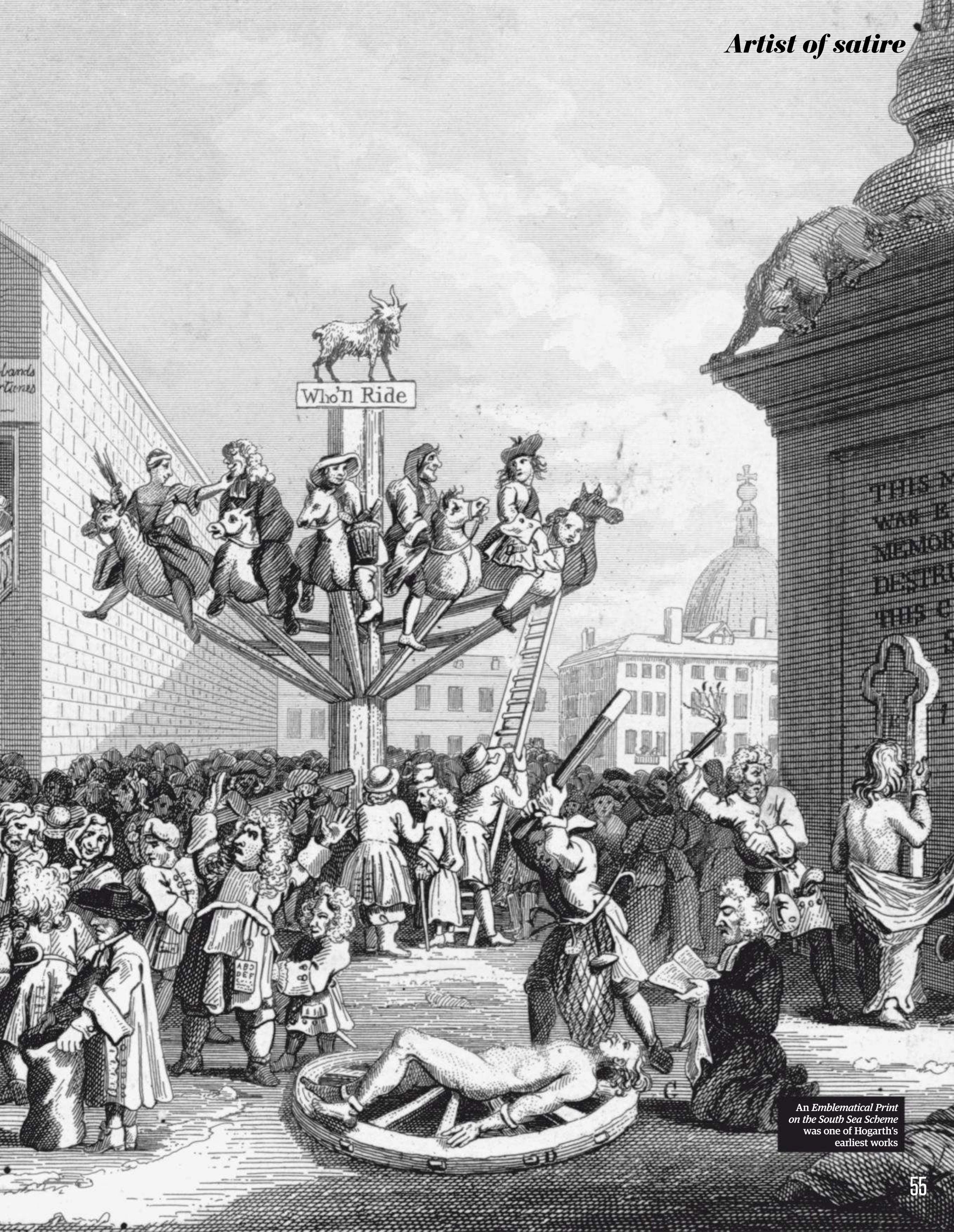
Hogarth was born on 10 November 1697 in Bartholomew Close, Smithfield, London. He was the son of Richard Hogarth, a Latin and Greek teacher, and Anne Gibbons. Richard was an entrepreneur at heart, who published Latin and Greek textbooks and opened a Latin-speaking coffee shop that ultimately failed, subsequently landing in Fleet prison for debt. At this time, his son was around ten years old and this experience during Hogarth's childhood would later go on to influence the darker aspects found in his art.

Unable to continue his education, Hogarth became an apprentice to the silver engraver Ellis Gamble in 1714. Developing his skills as an engraver over the next six years, Hogarth eventually made the decision to leave to start his own independent business in 1720. That same year, he enrolled at St Martin's Lane Academy, an art academy, and later at a drawing school run by Sir James Thornhill in Covent Garden in 1724. Five years later, he married Thornhill's daughter, Jane.

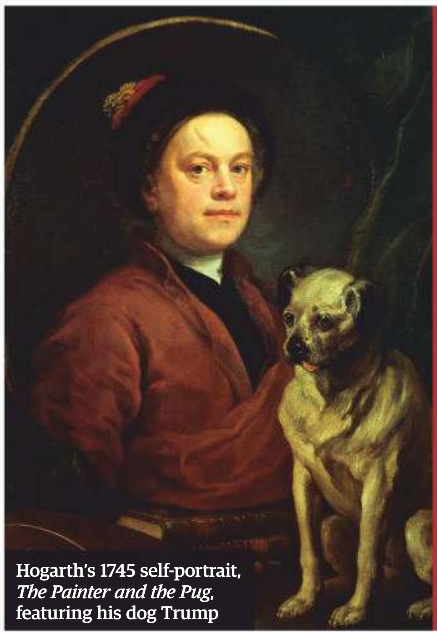


Hogarth wanted to be taken seriously as a traditional artist, but he gained more recognition for his satirical works





An *Emblematical Print on the South Sea Scheme* was one of Hogarth's earliest works



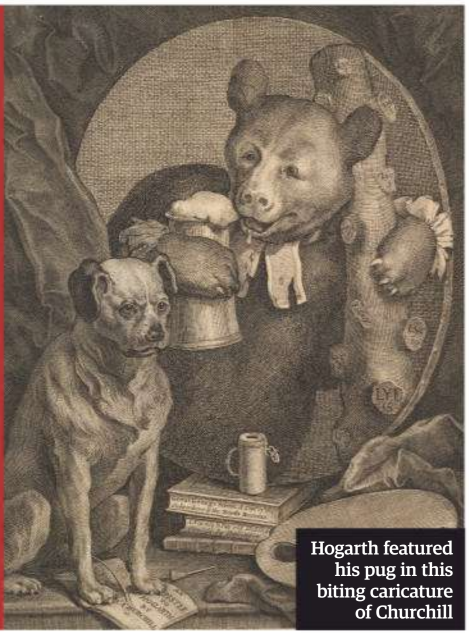
Hogarth's 1745 self-portrait, *The Painter and the Pug,* featuring his dog Trump

## The Painter and his Pug

Hogarth was known for his love for dogs, particularly his fondness for pugs, a breed that was popular among the upper class during his lifetime. In several artworks, Hogarth included pugs often as companions to human subjects or even as symbols of wealth.

One of his most iconic artworks is a self-portrait titled *The Painter and his Pug*, created in 1745. In this painting, his pet pug, Trump, sits next to his image – a painting within a painting. Trump, who is arguably the focal point of the self-portrait, represents Hogarth's own pugnacious nature. Trump was also featured in several of Hogarth's other paintings, including in the fifth scene of *A Rake's Progress*.

Despite critics ridiculing his love for his dog, Hogarth continued to feature Trump in his work. In 1763, he even based his satirical engraving *The Bruiser* – which caricatures the satirist Charles Churchill as a bear – on *The Painter and his Pug*. In the engraving, Trump urinates on Churchill's 'Epistle to William Hogarth', a piece published by Churchill in defence of journalist and politician John Wilkes after Hogarth had attacked the latter in an satirical engraving



Hogarth featured his pug in this biting caricature of Churchill

Hogarth began working in the genre of conversation pieces, informal group portraits usually commissioned by families and friends that depicted them in domestic settings and sharing activities. Although Hogarth helped to popularise this genre in Britain, the portraits did not provide him with a decent income. His early satirical prints, such as the *Emblematical Print on the South Sea Scheme*, created in 1721 following the scandalous collapse of the South Sea Company in 1720, also brought little commercial success for Hogarth.

As a result, Hogarth revealed in his *Autobiographical Notes* that he had chosen to turn his attention to "painting and engraving modern moral subjects" – narrative paintings and engravings portraying, satirising and moralising scenes from everyday life.

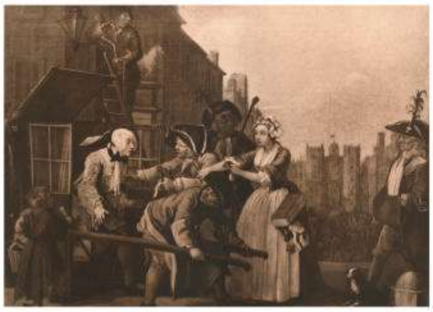
His first 'modern moral subject' was *A Harlot's Progress* in 1731, a series of six paintings depicting the journey of a naive country girl, M Hackabout, who moves to London, falls into prostitution and eventually dies from venereal disease. While an initial look at the paintings reveals their satirical humour, the actual subject matter is dark and bleak, reflecting the duality seen throughout Hogarth's work. With *A Harlot's Progress*, he highlighted how an innocent young woman could be corrupted and exploited by society and how, as a result, many working-class women in the city fell into moral decline.

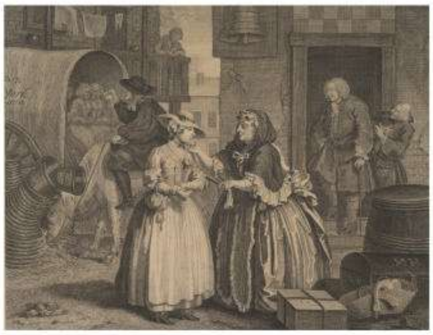
Hogarth created engravings of the six paintings and sold these via subscription in 1732 to huge success, with 1,240 subscribers. However, the series' popularity quickly led to many unauthorised reproductions of Hogarth's work.

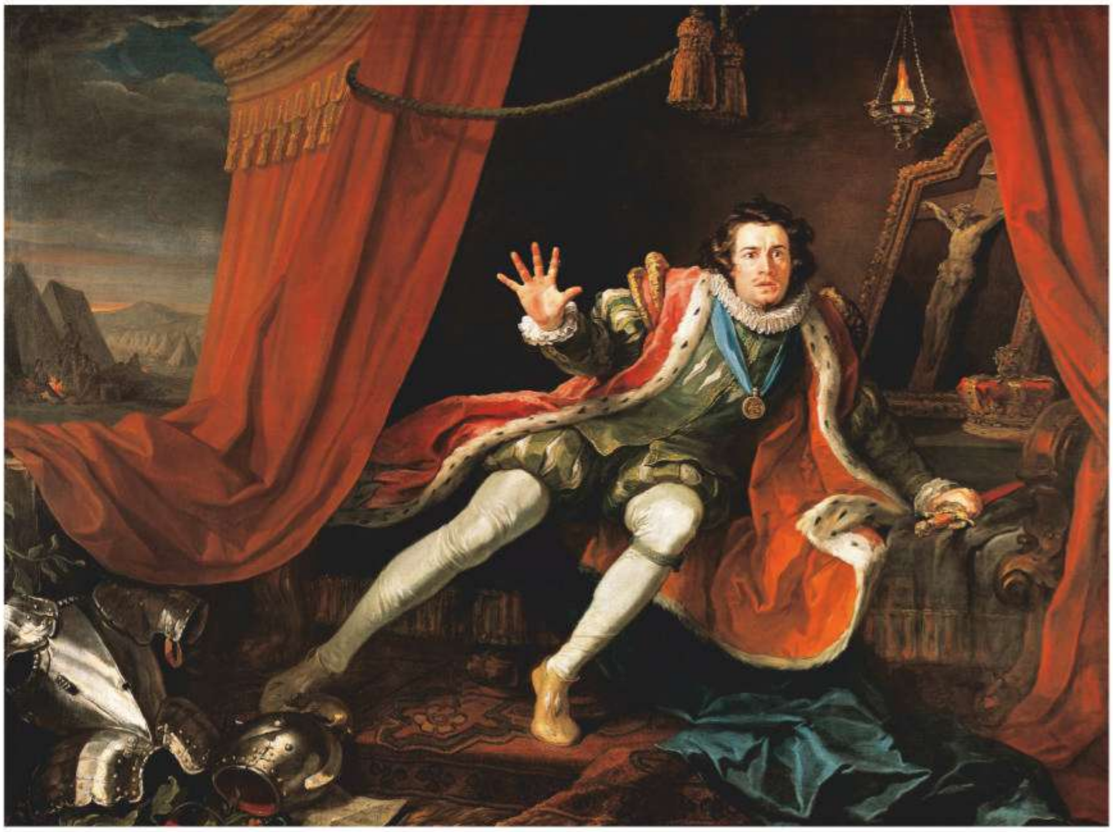
**BELOW LEFT** Tom Rakewell is arrested for debt in scene four of *A Rake's Progress*

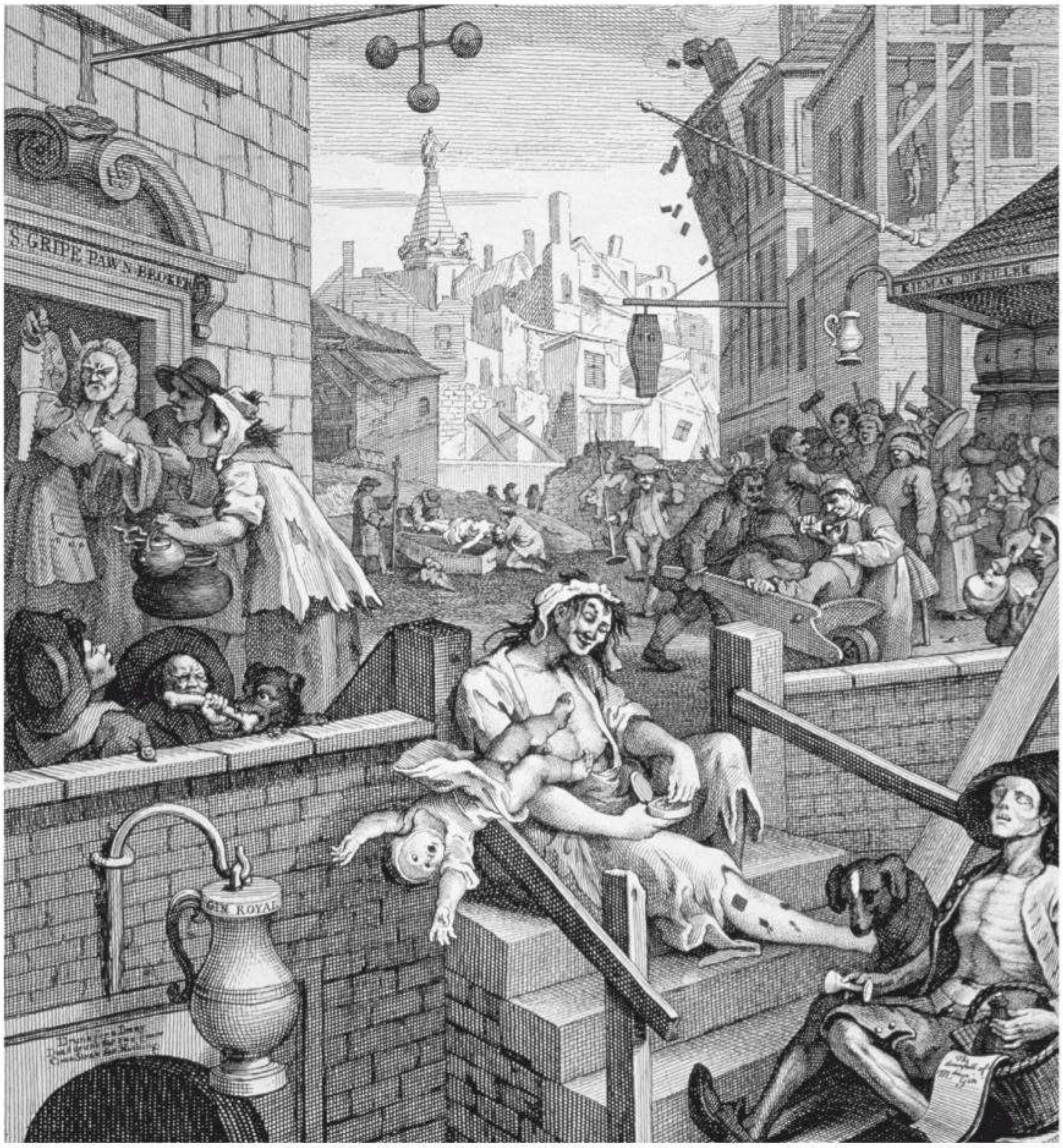
**BOTTOM LEFT** The scene one of *A Harlot's Progress*, Hogarth's first commercial success

**BELOW** Hogarth's portrait of the actor David Garrick as Richard III, 1741









**ABOVE** *Gin Lane* marked Hogarth's first foray into the world of political propaganda

> “HOGARTH HAD ALWAYS ASPIRED TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY FOR HIS ART”

Frustrated, Hogarth fought for greater legal protection over copies of his work, as well as the work of other artists. This led to the creation of the Engravers' Copyright Act, which passed in 1735, and was the first copyright law to recognise the rights of original artists and ensure that they were paid correctly.

With the act in place, Hogarth finally published the engravings for his next hugely successful moral tale, *A Rake's Progress*, having completed the original paintings around 1734. In this series of eight paintings, Hogarth illustrates the rise and fall of Tom Rakewell, the male counterpart to M Hackabout. A young man who comes into his inheritance, Rakewell leaves his pregnant fiancée and squanders his new fortune on expensive clothes as he attempts to advance in society. However, he ends up falling into a life of debauchery, vice and debt in London, before dying in Bethlem Royal Hospital. It serves as a moral tale, depicting the evils of alcohol, gambling and attempting to rise above your station.

After the death of his father-in-law in 1734, Hogarth reestablished the former's drawing school and made the step into history painting. He decorated two large walls in the entrance hall for St Bartholomew's Hospital with the biblical paintings *The Pool of Bethesda* and *The Good Samaritan*, even though he had little training in this genre of art. Hogarth had always aspired to be taken seriously for his art and had offered his services for free, however, it is generally agreed by both his contemporaries and modern critics that he had been over-ambitious in attempting the highly classical style.

Following a period of working in portrait painting and building his artistic reputation, during which time he famously painted the actor David Garrick as Richard III, Hogarth returned to his ‘modern moral subjects' and created the six-part series *Marriage A-la-Mode* in 1743. The story focuses on the arranged marriage between the son of a profligate aristocrat and the daughter of a wealthy merchant. Their fathers arranged the marriage for financial and social gain, with the unhappy couple eventually falling into separate vices and ending with their deaths. Hogarth's first series to satirise the upper class, criticising the act of marrying for money rather than love, was published as engravings for subscribers in 1745. Although widely analysed today, the series achieved little success for Hogarth during his lifetime.

In 1751, Hogarth released arguably his most famous work, *Gin Lane*, in support of the Gin Act, which restricted the sale of gin to reduce consumption of the alcohol in Britain. Gin, a cheap and addictive foreign alcohol, had soared in popularity thanks to a 1689 ban on the import of French wine and spirits, and was blamed for a rise in crime in London.

Hogarth's engraving depicts a scene teeming with madness, starvation, suicide and even murder, with a half-naked and intoxicated woman dropping her baby down the stairs, as the craze for gin has caused society to break down. Depicting people dealing with poverty and destitution because of the effect of gin, Hogarth's piece is not only satirical, but it is also a piece of political propaganda, marking the start of a more propagandist side to his work. It was issued alongside another print by Hogarth, *Beer Street*, illustrating happy, healthy people in a thriving society and celebrating beer – a drink traditionally brewed in Britain – in comparison to the evils of the gin.

Having built a reputation as an artist – outside of the academic world – who used humour to highlight moral failings and hypocrisy throughout his lifetime, Hogarth died in 1764. He left his print business to his wife, Jane, who continued to successfully print and sell his work.

As a pioneer in the medium of satire, who not only brought it to wider audiences through mass production but also to new levels through his skill, Hogarth's witty social commentary and observations of human nature made him a popular artist who left behind a legacy that remains influential to this day.

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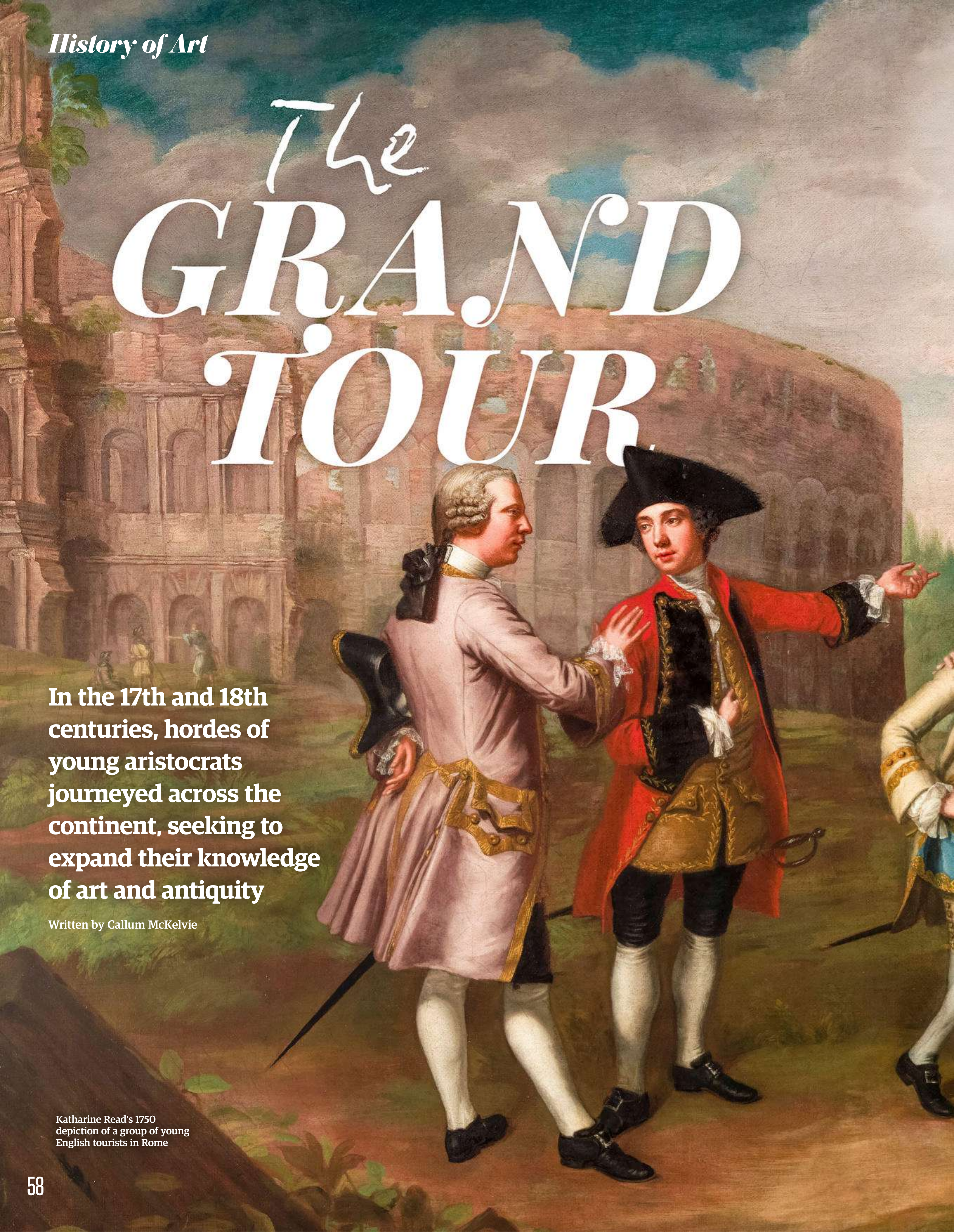
# The GRAND TOUR

**In the 17th and 18th centuries, hordes of young aristocrats journeyed across the continent, seeking to expand their knowledge of art and antiquity**

Written by Callum McKelvie



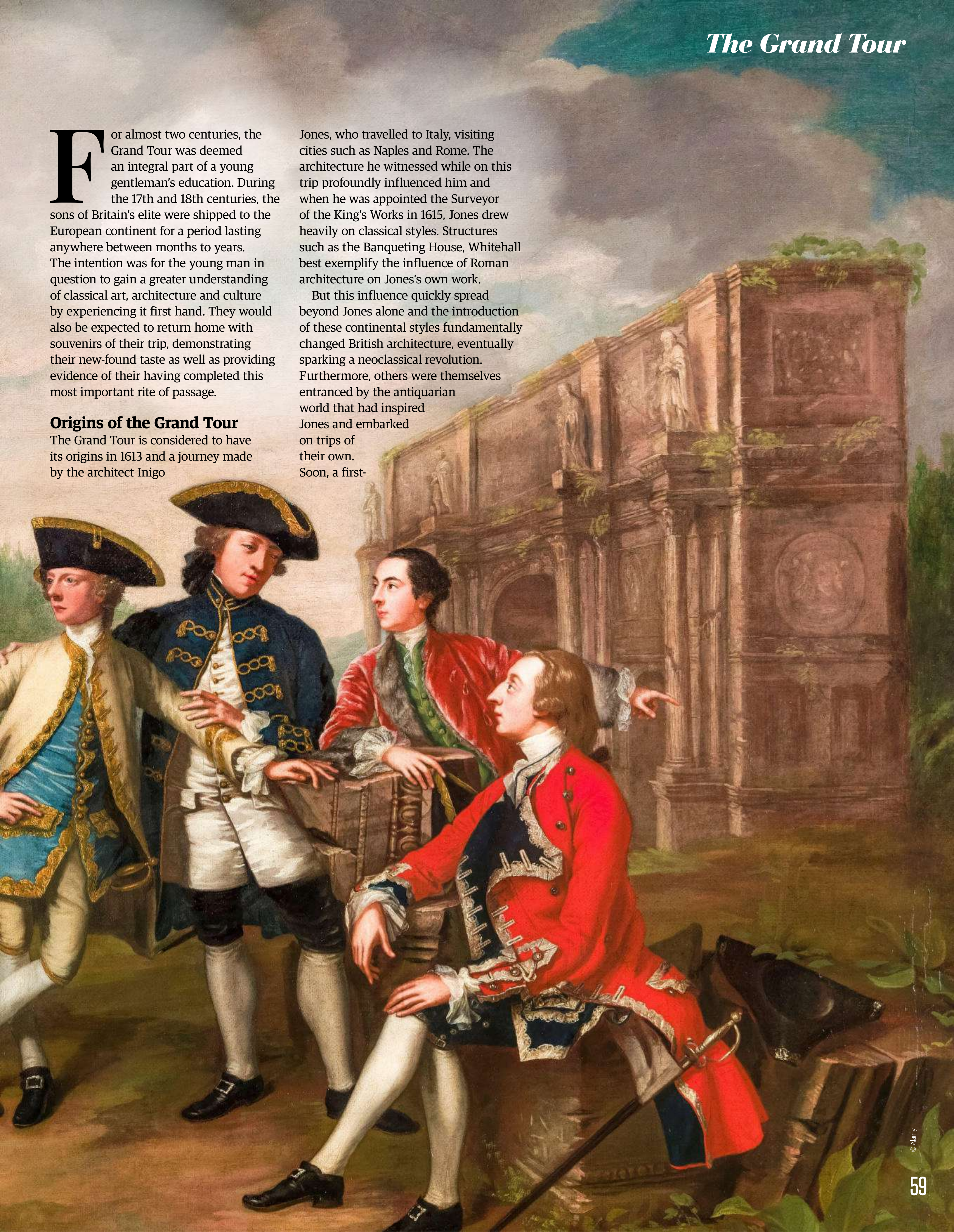
Katharine Read's 1750 depiction of a group of young English tourists in Rome

For almost two centuries, the Grand Tour was deemed an integral part of a young gentleman's education. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the sons of Britain's elite were shipped to the European continent for a period lasting anywhere between months to years. The intention was for the young man in question to gain a greater understanding of classical art, architecture and culture by experiencing it first hand. They would also be expected to return home with souvenirs of their trip, demonstrating their new-found taste as well as providing evidence of their having completed this most important rite of passage.

## Origins of the Grand Tour

The Grand Tour is considered to have its origins in 1613 and a journey made by the architect Inigo Jones, who travelled to Italy, visiting cities such as Naples and Rome. The architecture he witnessed while on this trip profoundly influenced him and when he was appointed the Surveyor of the King's Works in 1615, Jones drew heavily on classical styles. Structures such as the Banqueting House, Whitehall best exemplify the influence of Roman architecture on Jones's own work.

But this influence quickly spread beyond Jones alone and the introduction of these continental styles fundamentally changed British architecture, eventually sparking a neoclassical revolution. Furthermore, others were themselves entranced by the antiquarian world that had inspired Jones and embarked on trips of their own. Soon, a first-



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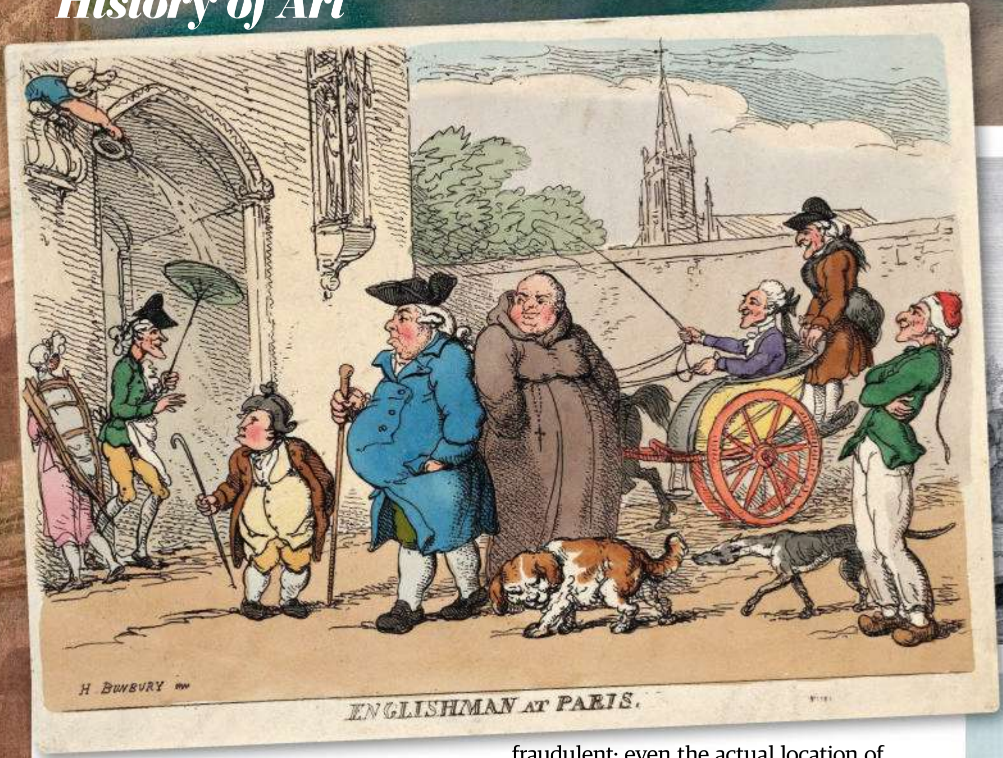
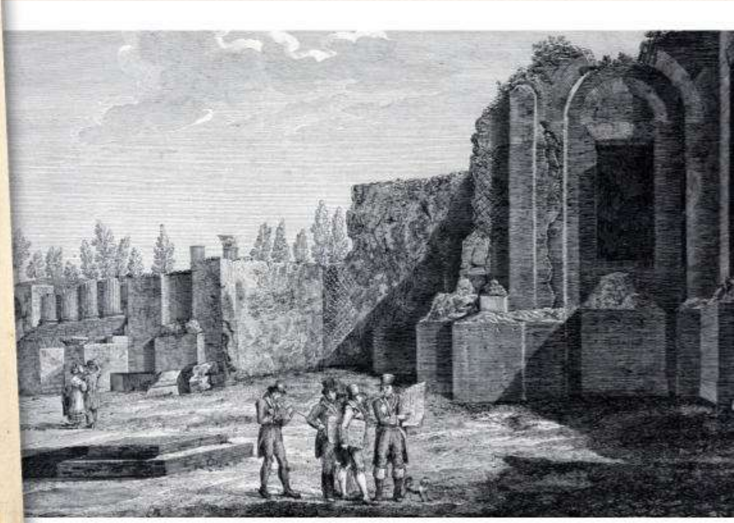
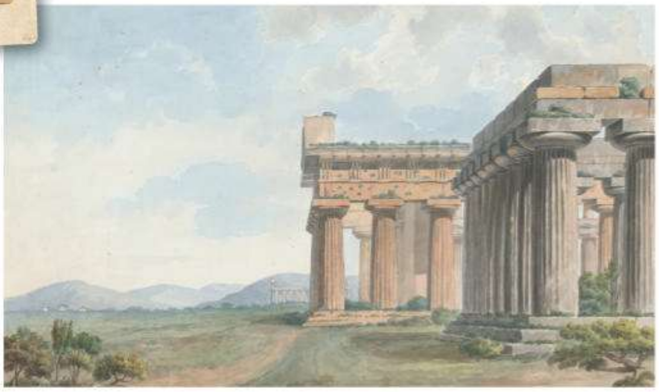






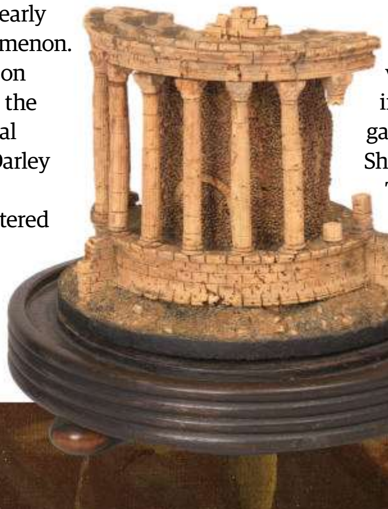
hand knowledge of classical culture began to be seen as an important final part of a young gentleman's education.

It was in 1670 that Richard Lassels coined the term, 'Grand Tour' in his *A Voyage of Italy*, considered one of the first guidebooks. In it, Lassels outlined his ideas that such journeys were integral to the education of young gentlemen, who hungrily devoured Lassels' work as one of the view available books on the subject. Lassels himself became known as something of an expert on Italy, acting as a 'bear leader' for many of the affluent youths who travelled there.

## Who took the Grand Tour?

As previously stated, the Grand Tourists were mostly the young sons of wealthy families. These young men could be anywhere between the ages of 17 and 22, though in most cases were around the age of 21. Although the Grand Tour was not limited purely to British travellers, it is with Britain that the phenomenon is primarily associated. Despite some travelling for shorter periods, most tourists would usually be away from home for at least a year.

These journeys were no easy task, particularly in the early years of the phenomenon. In her 2008 paper on the Grand Tour for the architectural journal *Perspecta*, Gillian Darley stated some of the difficulties encountered in these early tours; "Entry controls were time consuming and officials fraudulent; even the actual location of borders could be unpredictable. Once on the road, there were incomprehensible dialects to confuse the best-prepared linguist, as well as the oddities in diet, currency, and, above all, religion."



## What happened on the Grand Tour?

But just what were these hordes of young aristocrats doing as they flocked to the continent? Typically accompanied by a tutor, referred to as a 'bear leader', they would spend much of their time travelling to ruins and contemplating the majesty of the ancient world. They may have also viewed the masterpieces of the Renaissance, building an understanding not only of classical antiquity but more contemporary culture. Particularly well-connected travellers might spend time at court, mingling with high society and learning etiquette.

But for some of these young men, their diaries reveal that the main highlight of the trip was of a more hedonistic nature. "What they tended to do was to go and drink a lot, to gamble, to frequent [sex workers]" Eric G Zuelow, the author of *A History of Modern Tourism*, told the ABC *Rear Vision* podcast. This behaviour did not go unnoticed, with many returning having contracted venereal diseases or having incurred huge losses from gambling. Surgeon Samuel Sharp, just one critic of the Grand Tour, publicly condemned what he perceived as the morally corrupting nature of the Italian culture, in his 1766 work, *Letters From Italy*.

**ABOVE LEFT** Thomas Rowlandson's 1767 caricature, *Englishman at Paris*, mocking the way the 18th century tourist was viewed by Parisian locals

**TOP** A group of Grand Tourists visit the ruins of Pompey in the early 19th century

**ABOVE** The temple ruins at Paestum, c 1785. The ruins were a popular spot among Grand Tourists

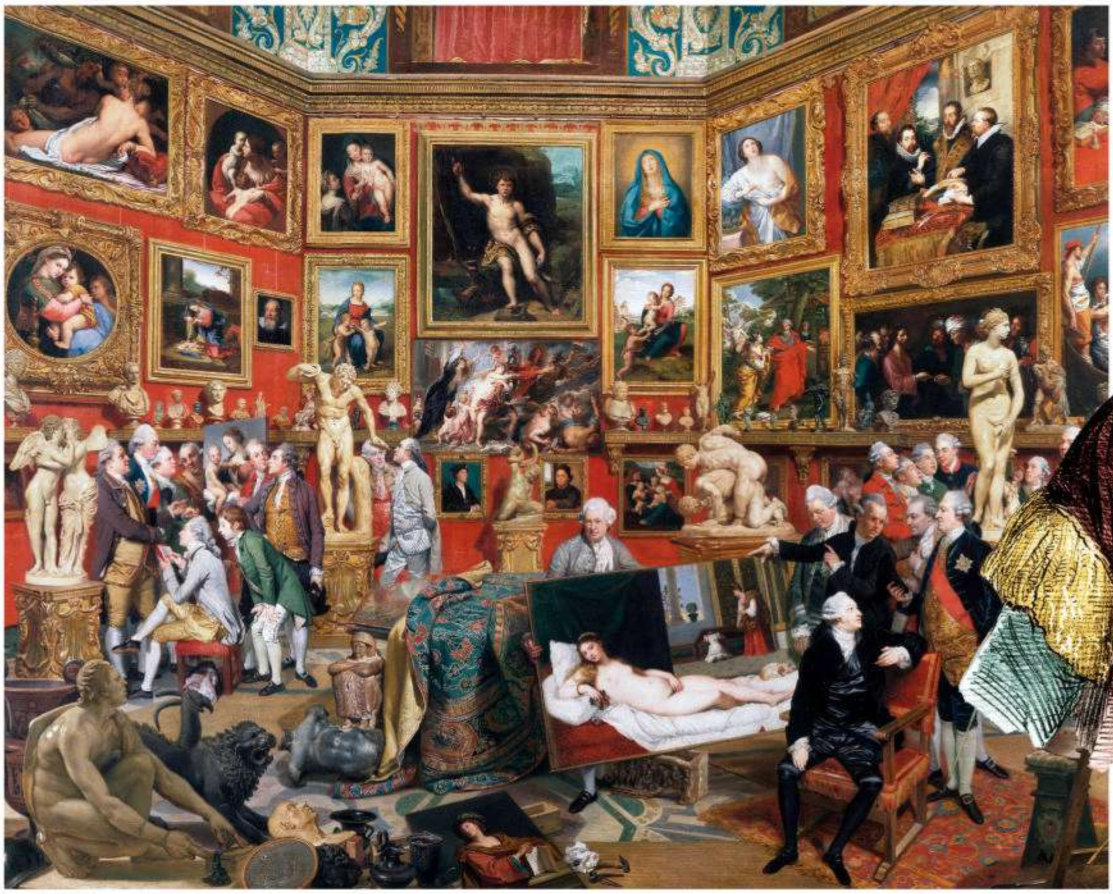
**LEFT** An example of an 18th century architectural model, of the kind commissioned by Grand Tourists

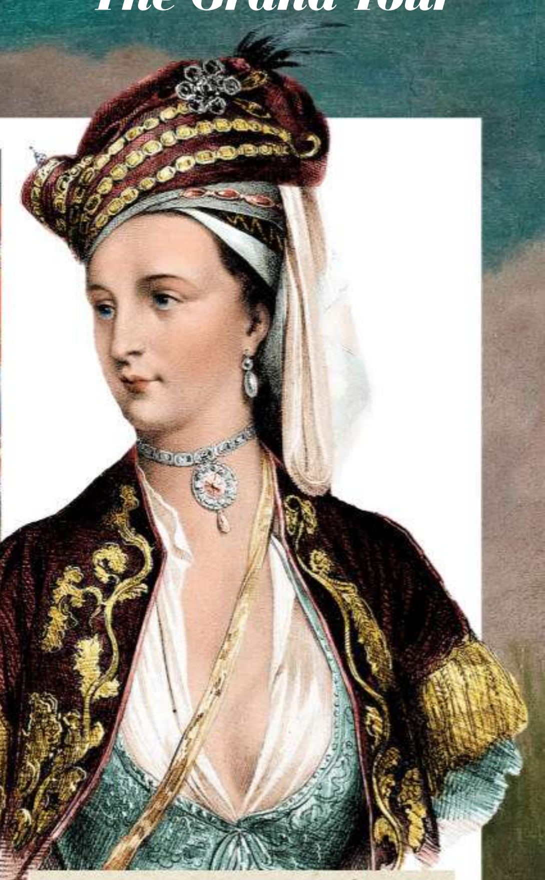
But for others, the trip provided a freedom from the constricting laws of British society. Author Jeremy Black states that Britain in the 18th century had seen a hardening of attitudes towards homosexuality, whereas Italy provided young gay men seeking to explore their sexuality with a veritable playground in which to do so. Famed poet Lord Byron undertook his own Grand Tour in the Mediterranean in 1809, purportedly having a number of troubling relationships with adolescent boys.

## Where did they go?

Most Grand Tourists would begin their journey in Dover, taking a three-day voyage across the Channel until they arrived in France, where they would likely spend some time in Paris. At the time the city was a highly fashionable destination, renowned for its fine art and culture. According to Arturo Tosi in his 2020 work, *Language and the Grand Tour*, "most visitors were acquainted with only two itineraries in France; from the border to Paris, and from Paris to Italy".

However, the main destination was Italy and historic cities such as Rome, Naples, Florence and Venice. But in order to arrive in Italy, how did the Grand Tourists cross the Alps? One popular way of making the





journey was by sedan chair, which was a chair in the middle of a pair of poles, carried by local guides. "They are light, & well contrived for carrying," Grand Tourist Sir William Guise wrote in a diary entry from 1764. "You take 4 or 6 men, who change at fixed distances, and carry you an amazing pace."

## Collecting souvenirs

One of the most important aspects of the Grand Tour was the collecting of souvenirs. The nature of these souvenirs could vary wildly and included everything from original Italian antiquities – taken from historical sites – to paintings, to bound books. These treasures were not merely mementos, but were intended to function as status symbols that proved their owners to be widely travelled and highly cultured. Many took the opportunity to have their portraits painted, with the skills of the famous artist Pompeo Batoni being the most sought after.

The Grand Tour also saw the rise in an entirely new industry. These young wealthy travellers, touched by the works they had seen, began to commission artists to create replicas for their homes – leading to the rise of the replica tourism industry.

In the 18th century, architectural replicas of ancient ruins made out of cork proved popular when it was discovered that this unassuming material could properly capture the texture of ancient, crumbling marble. Others soon began to make their own miniature cork marvels, such as Augusto Rosa, Antonio Chichi and Giovanni Altieri. Commissioned through art dealers, they created tiny replicas of ancient marvels such as the Doric temples at Paestum, the Colosseum and the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli.

**ABOVE** *The Tribuna of the Uffizi* by Johann Zoffany, a depiction of the famous collection of the Duke of Tuscany in Florence

**ABOVE RIGHT** Lady Mary Wortley Montagu who travelled to Italy and eventually moved there permanently

## End of the Grand Tour

By the early 1900s, the Grand Tour had already started to become a thing of the past. There were a variety of reasons for this. Over a century earlier, in 1789, France was rocked by revolution and four years later Louis XVI and his bride, Marie Antoinette, would be executed. Although this monumental event did not immediately cause the Grand Tours to cease, it made travel much more difficult and was the beginning of the end. However, the most damning blow was the opening of the first passenger rail service in 1807. By the mid-19th century, the railway had become a popular form of transportation across Europe. The result was, while travel was still predominantly a luxury for the upper classes, it was becoming far more commonplace.

## Women on the Grand Tour

### Contrary to popular belief, it wasn't just the boys who went away to have some fun on the continent…

Although the Grand Tour is often thought of as being a predominantly male experience, many women also embarked upon travels of their own. Usually this would be to accompany their husband or another relative, particularly as travel across the continent became more popular. According to Rosemary Sweet's *Cities and the Grand Tour*, as time wore on mothers and fathers would take their daughters there to complete their own educations and gain a wider appreciation of art and culture. Mary Wollstonecraft, the celebrated women's rights activist, was one of the few who were able to travel abroad as part of her education.

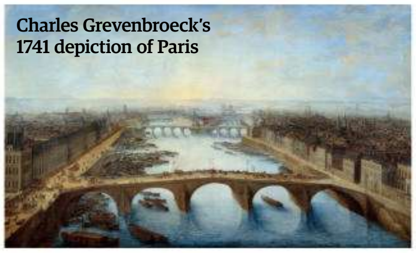
But this was not always the case and there are examples of women taking journeys unaccompanied. In 1739, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu travelled to Italy, leaving her husband in pursuit of a young lover, only to be jilted upon her arrival. It wasn't a loss – she found herself falling in love with the country. She eventually moved there permanently and her adoration for her new home was well known. According to Rosemary Sweet, in 1794 Sarah Bentham claimed to have met an "otherwise unidentified Mrs Motte" who "travelled on her own accompanied by her female servant".

© Alamy, Getty Images

# Take a trip...

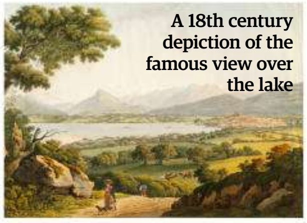
LONDON
Portsmouth
Str. of Dover
Amsterdam
glish Channel
Rouen
Coln
Coblenz
R. Maas
PARIS
Nantes
R. Loire
Luneville
R. Rhine
Bâle
FRANCE
Bern
HELV
Rochefort
Lyon
Bordeaux
Turin
Garonne
R. Rhone
Toulouse
Marseille

## Paris


Charles Grevenbroeck's 1741 depiction of Paris

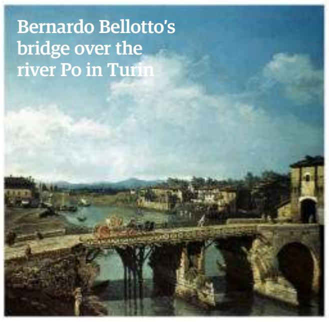
Paris was one of the most popular stops on the Grand Tour and at the time was considered the height of modern society. Most young English aristocrats would have spoken French, so the city provided them with an opportunity to test their linguistic skills. The city was also where the young men could be expected to learn the manners of high society.

## Geneva


A 18th century depiction of the famous view over the lake

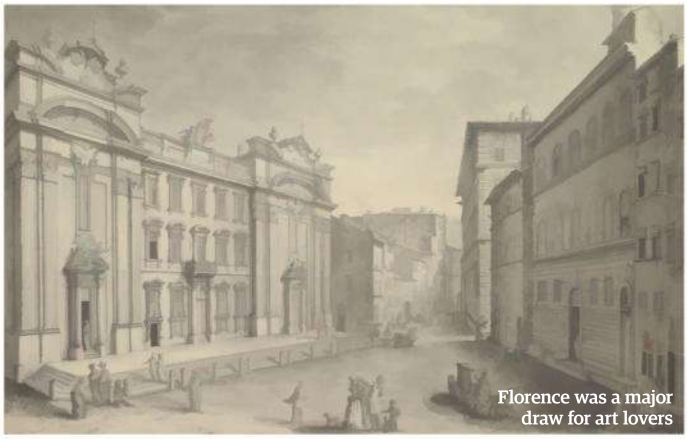
Before crossing the Alps the Grand Tourist would usually stop in Switzerland in either Geneva or Lausanne. The famous lake proved a popular spot to while away the hours, but many of the young men were unimpressed with the locals. Horace Walpole in 1739 noted, "Such uncouth rocks and such uncomely inhabitants… I hope I shall never see them again".

## Turin


Bernardo Bellotto's bridge over the river Po in Turin

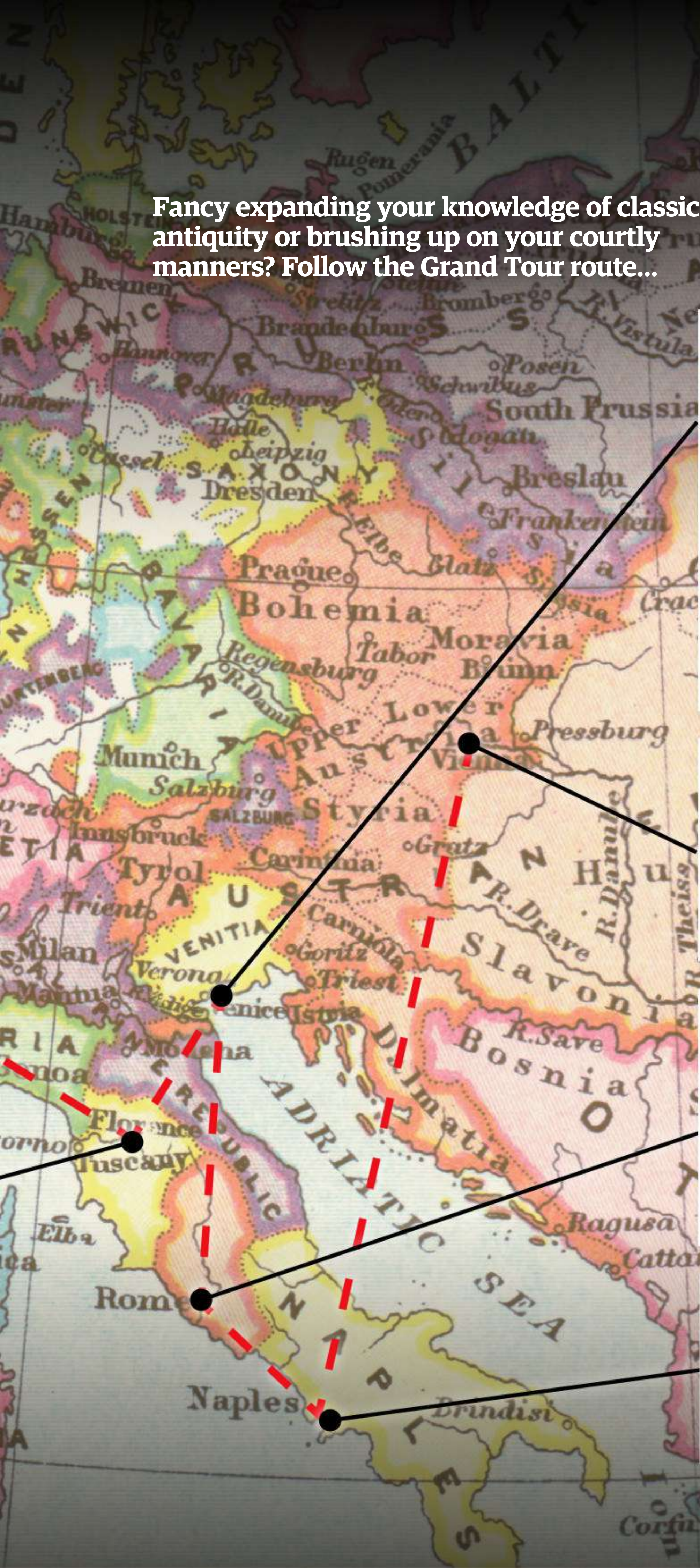
Turin was viewed as 'the gateway to Italy'. Some would stay and enjoy the natural beauty on offer, whereas others would quickly move on. Particularly aristocratic travellers may have found themselves presented at the court of Savoy, where they would have had the perfect opportunity to refine their etiquette.

## Florence


Florence was a major draw for art lovers

Florence was known for its art. In particular the Tribuna in the Uffizi Gallery. which housed the Duke of Tuscany's vast collection of famous masterworks of the Italian Renaissance, was a must visit for any Grand Tourist. By the 19th century a significant British community had emerged in the city.

**Fancy expanding your knowledge of classical antiquity or brushing up on your courtly manners? Follow the Grand Tour route...**


Rugen
Pomerania
BALTIC
Königsberg
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RUS
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Strelitz
Bromberg
Brandenburg
Hannover
Berlin
Posen
Schwibus
South Prussia
Magdeburg
Halle
Leipzig
Glogau
Cassel
SAXONY
Dresden
Breslau
Frankenstein
Elbe
Glatz
Prague
Bohemia
Moravia
Tabor
Brunn
Regensburg
BAVARIA
WURTEMBERG
R. Danube
Lower
Pressburg
Munich
Upper Austria
Vienna
Salzburg
SALZBURG
Styria
Innsbruck
Tyrol
Gratz
Carinthia
HUNGARY
R. Drave
R. Danube
Theiss
Trient
VENITIA
Carniola
Goritz
Triest
Slavonia
Milan
Verona
Mantua
Venice
Istria
R. Save
Bosnia
Modena
Dalmatia
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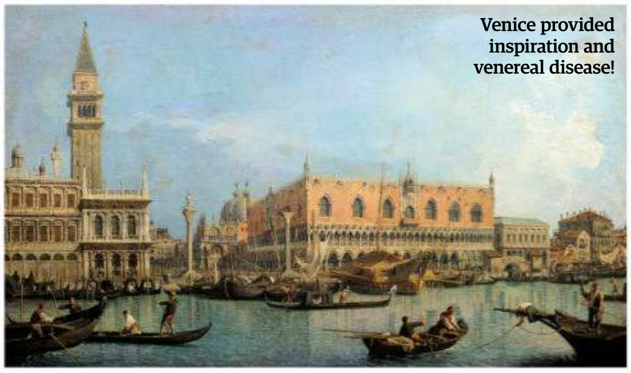
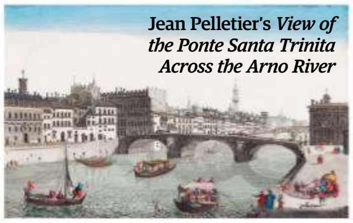

Venice provided inspiration and venereal disease!

## Venice

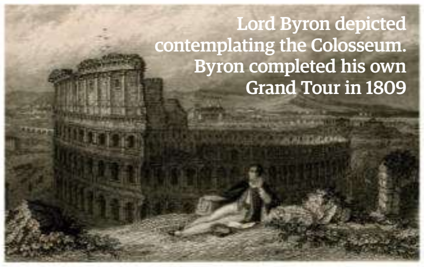
The beauty of Venice, particularly the canals, entranced the Grand Tourists and saw a number of landscape souvenirs commissioned by them. Venice was also known as a hive of vice and decadence, notorious for its many brothels, where a number of young men visited and returned with strains of venereal disease.

## Vienna

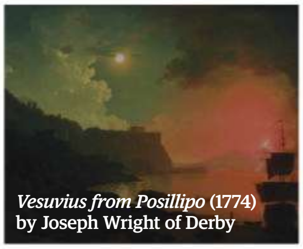

Jean Pelletier's *View of the Ponte Santa Trinita Across the Arno River*

Although Naples was primarily viewed as the tour's conclusion, Grand Tourists might choose to take a brief sojourn at a European city on the journey home. From the 1750s onwards, Vienna was increasingly popular for this. It was viewed as somewhere where courtly manners could be learnt and was known for education and culture.

## Rome


Lord Byron depicted contemplating the Colosseum. Byron completed his own Grand Tour in 1809

Rome was considered the principal destination for many a Grand Tourist. This stop would be one of study and pleasure, with the tourists visiting historical ruins such as the Forum and Colosseum as well as viewing the many art treasures the city had to offer. A popular souvenir from the city was a portrait by Pompeo Batoni.


*Vesuvius from Posillipo* (1774) by Joseph Wright of Derby

## Naples

The discovery of Pompeii towards the end of the 16th century made Naples a popular destination. The city also became popular for the cultural entertainment it offered, namely the opera. Some brave travellers would even attempt the difficult ascent of Mount Vesuvius.

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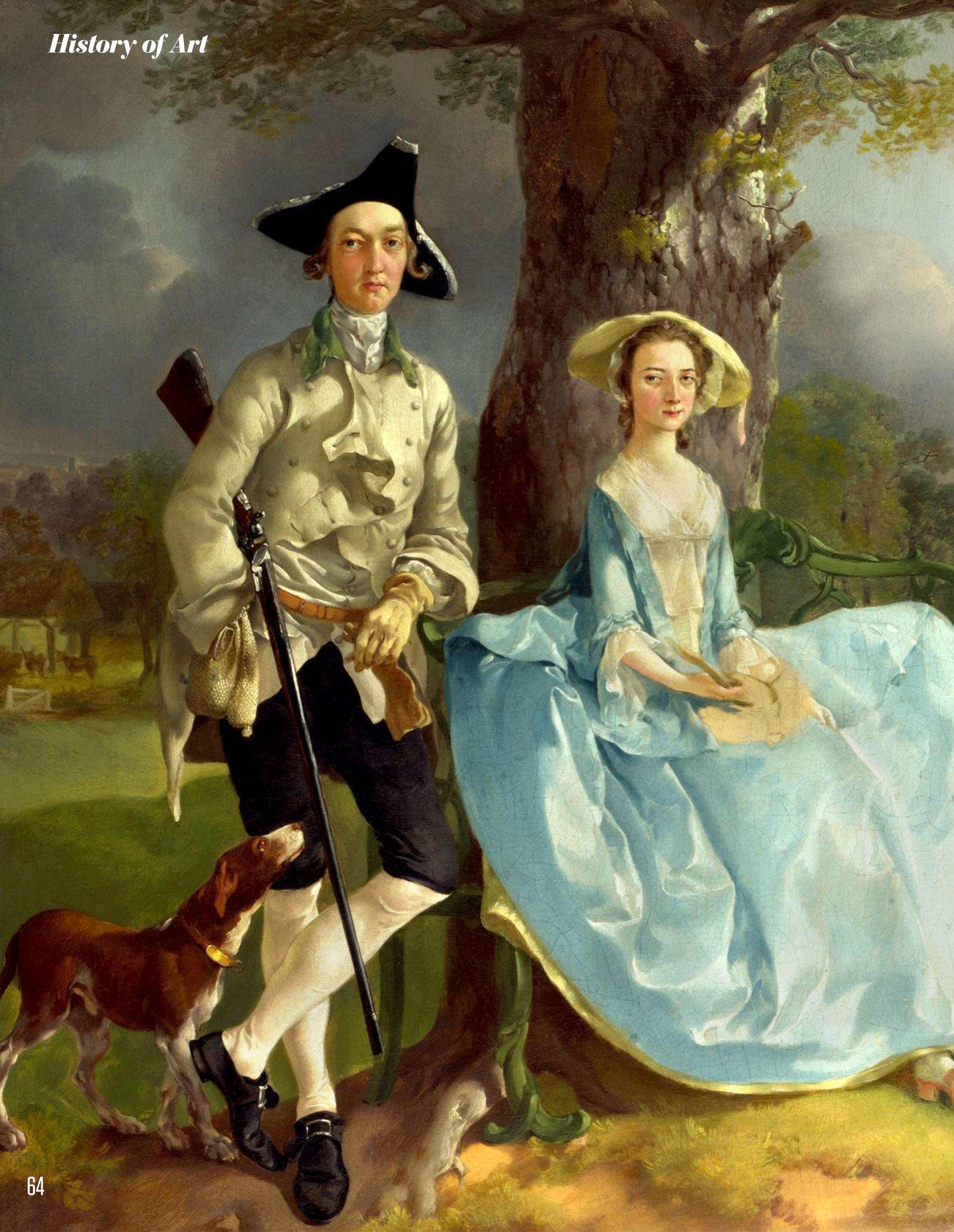
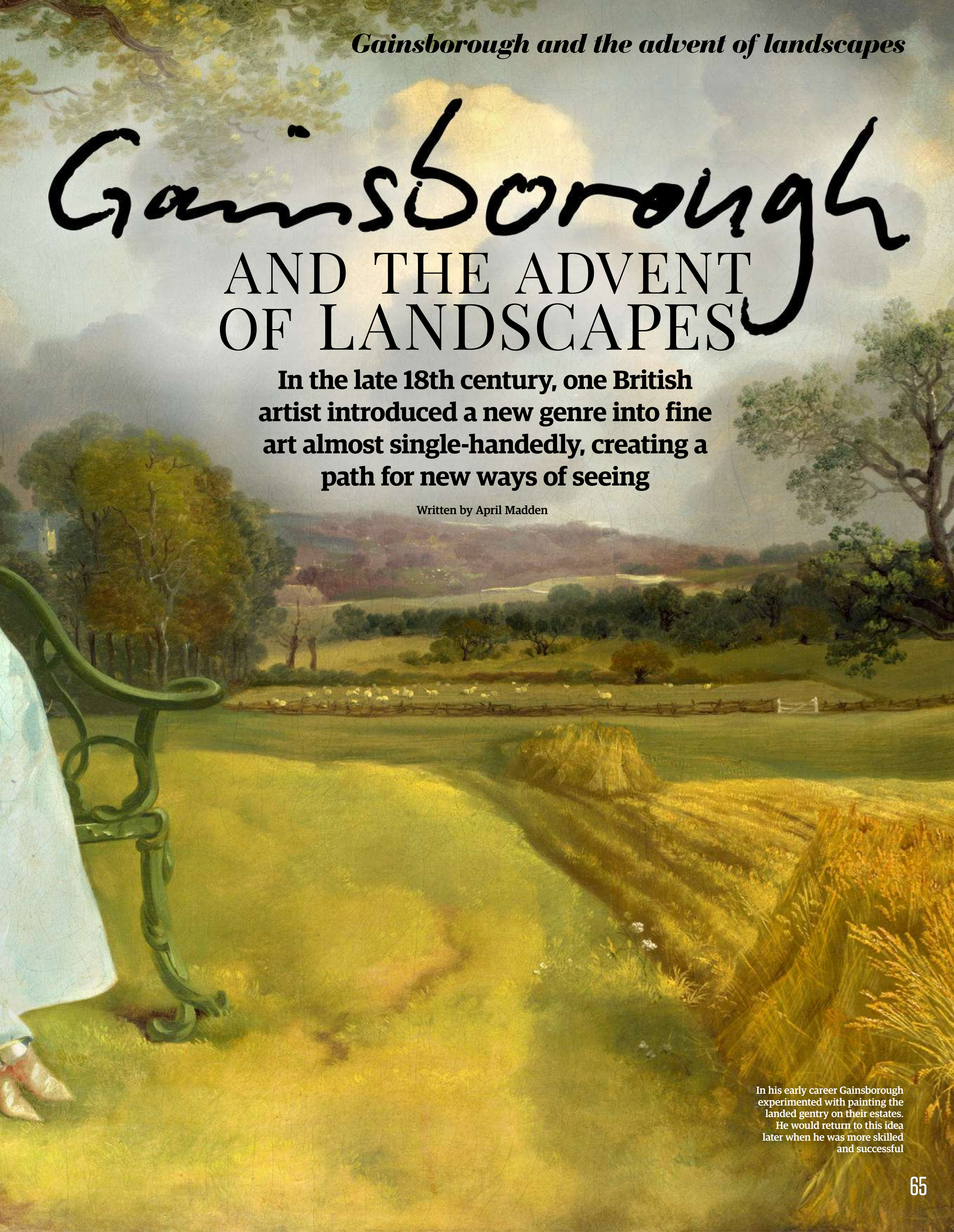


# Gainsborough AND THE ADVENT OF LANDSCAPES

**In the late 18th century, one British artist introduced a new genre into fine art almost single-handedly, creating a path for new ways of seeing**

Written by April Madden



In his early career Gainsborough experimented with painting the landed gentry on their estates. He would return to this idea later when he was more skilled and successful

"I'm sick of portraits," Thomas Gainsborough wrote to his friend William Jackson. It was the 4th of June, sometime between 1759 and 1774, and the thirty-something artist was enjoying a career as a fashionable portrait painter in the genteel English spa city of Bath. Or rather, he wasn't enjoying it at all: "[I] wish to take my viol da gamba and walk off to some sweet village where I can paint Landskips and enjoy the fag-end of life in quietness and ease," he continued.

Gainsborough loved painting the English countryside. If he couldn't get out in it during the day because of the demands of his work, then he'd set up a little tabletop diorama at night, with mirrors for water, pebbles and stones for rocks and hills, and broccoli florets for trees. This last wasn't cheap; it had only been introduced to Britain in the 1720s and was known as 'sprout colli-flower' or 'Italian asparagus'. It was a delicacy for fine tables, and here was Gainsborough – a Suffolk weaver's son who before his career as a portraitist had taken off, had several times been reduced to borrowing money against his wife's meagre inheritance – buying broccoli to play with.

Gainsborough's wife Margaret was the illegitimate daughter of Henry Somerset-Scudamore, 3rd Duke of Beaufort. The Duke had no other children, but her birth out of wedlock and the law of primogeniture meant that Margaret couldn't inherit his titles, estates or wealth. She had a small annuity of £200 a year which, as we know from the Jane Austen novels of the time, was barely enough to keep a genteel family. When the couple's children came along, Gainsborough could no longer afford to indulge his love of painting landscapes, or even of painting broccoli. He had to get himself a real job.

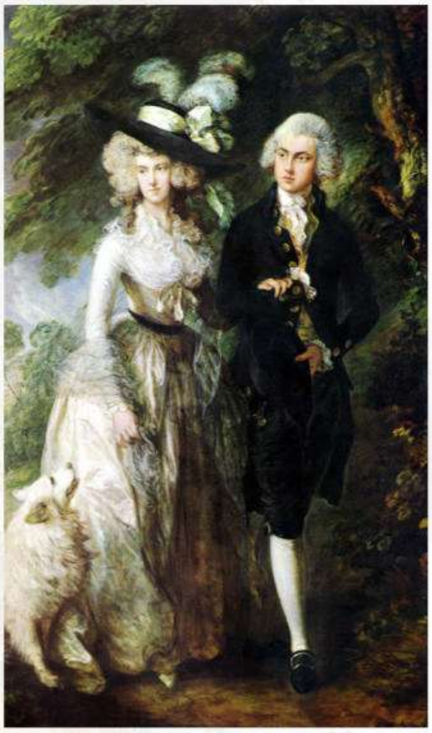
Fortunately a real job for Gainsborough still meant creating art. He may have come from humble beginnings compared to some of the gentleman-artists of the period, but like his brothers, he was prodigiously talented. Humphrey and James Gainsborough's gifts both lay in

**RIGHT** Eventually Gainsborough's land-owning customers embraced his landscape settings as a way of making their portraits look fresh and charming, as well as showcasing their estates

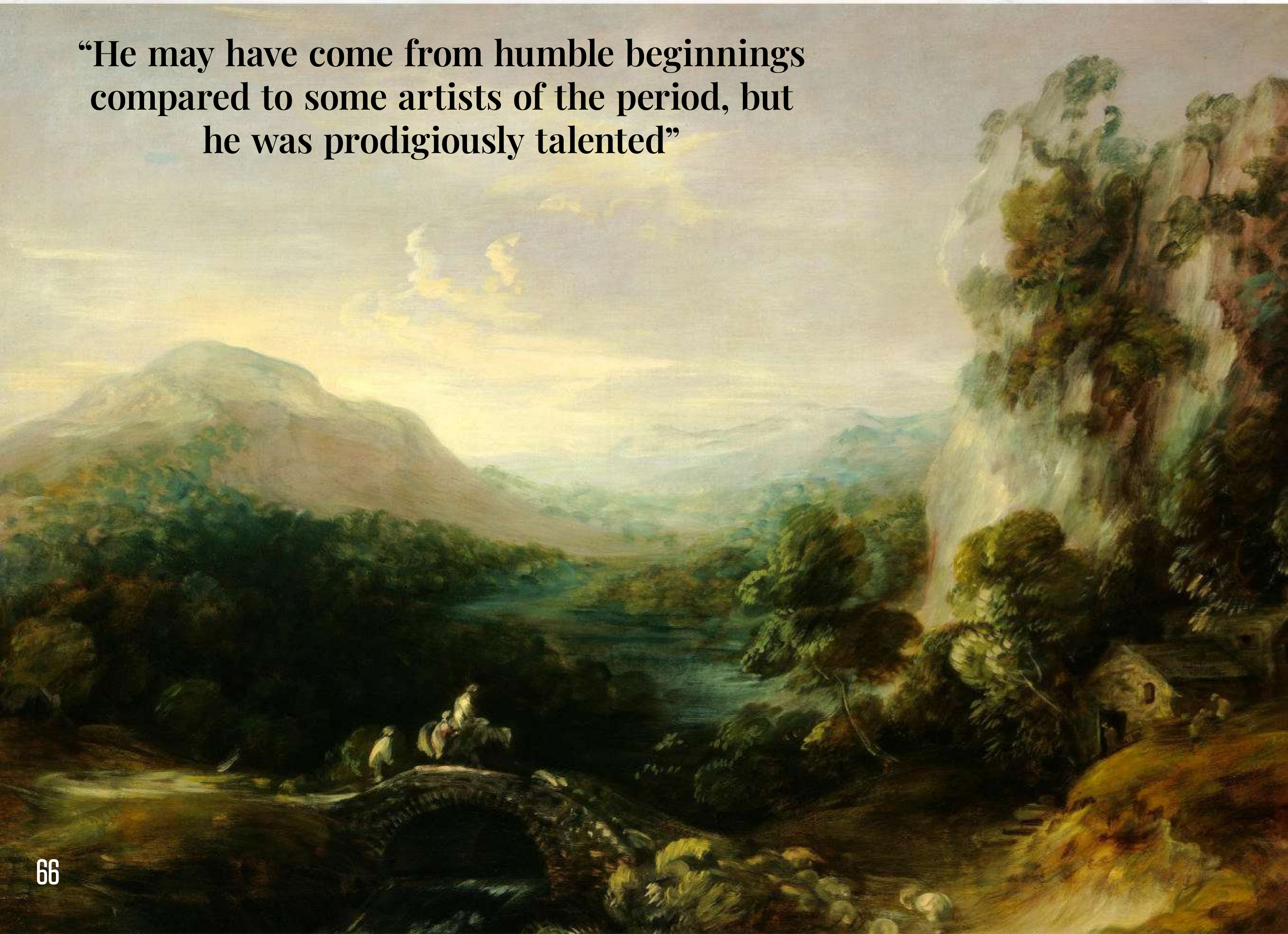
**BELOW** Gainsborough was most interested in capturing the momentary energy of a scene: trees blowing in the wind, clouds scudding by, the rippling of water

**BELOW RIGHT** The arrival of Gainsborough's daughters, Molly and Peggy, meant he had to forgo landscape painting for a more stable career as a portraitist

**BELOW FAR RIGHT** Gainsborough made use of scribbles, layers and washes that were most effective viewed from a short distance away



"He may have come from humble beginnings compared to some artists of the period, but he was prodigiously talented"



invention and engineering, but Thomas was a born artist. By the age of ten he was painting portraits and landscapes, and at just 13 he was off to London to study art. The boy Gainsborough was trained by renowned French engraver Hubert Gravelot, and became an assistant to painter Francis Hayman on his decorative commissions at Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens. By the late 1740s William Hogarth, famous for his satirical art, had invited the young painter into a group of artists who were decorating the Court Room of the Foundling Hospital, a home for abandoned children that was patronised by a number of benefactors from the art world as well as the aristocracy. It's likely here that Gainsborough first encountered the fellow artist who would become his arch-rival, Sir Joshua Reynolds.

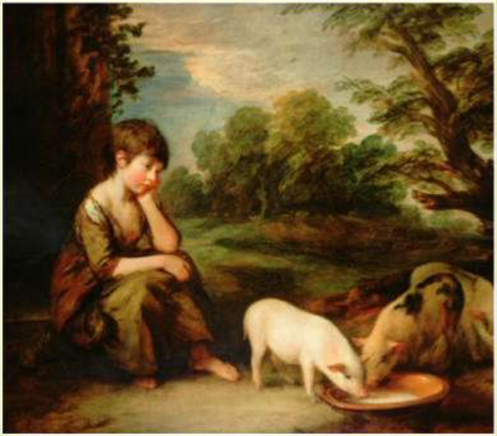
Like Gainsborough, Reynolds paid his bills with society portrait commissions. Also like Gainsborough, Reynolds had another genre of art about which he was passionate. For Reynolds this was history painting; scenes from classical history, myth and legend that generally had an implicit moral or intellectual meaning. But Reynolds was more genteel than Gainsborough. He was the son of a prestigious Devon schoolmaster who was both a fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, and an ordained Anglican minister. His intellectual older sister, Mary, had paid half of his tuition fees to become apprenticed to fashionable portraitist Thomas Hudson. He'd been on the Grand Tour, a cultural pilgrimage through Italy, also partially financed by his sister, and around the Mediterranean with his friend and patron Augustus Keppel, 1st Viscount Keppel, who was then in command of the Royal Navy's Mediterranean Fleet. He had a wide circle of friends among the intelligentsia, for whom he founded a supper club in a private room at the Turk's Head tavern in London's Gerrard Street. Gainsborough hadn't been abroad. He didn't much like reading. He found his wealthy, fashionable portrait clients pretentious and boring: "There is not such a set of enemies to a real artist in the world as they are, if not kept at a proper distance," he wrote to William Jackson. Nonetheless, it was Gainsborough's vivid, instantly recognisable style that won him royal commissions from King George III and Queen Charlotte, who both adored his work. Reynolds had to content himself instead with the presidency of the Royal Academy, of which both artists were founding members.

For the Academy Gainsborough didn't have to paint portraits; he could choose the paintings that he submitted for exhibition, and instead indulge his true love of English landscapes. Reynolds, who favoured the elevated, sometimes pompous style called the Grand Manner, in which even relatively ordinary people were depicted like royalty or mythical figures, was said to despise Gainsborough's bucolic scenes. As president of the Royal Academy, he had control over whose work was hung where. Gainsborough believed that Reynolds deliberately had his work 'skyed' – hung high on the walls, above doors and near ceilings, where visitors would have to crane their necks (already straining under the weight of elaborate Georgian hats and wigs) to view them. Gainsborough seethed. He knew there was no point raising the issue with Reynolds – his urbane, articulate rival would easily rebuff the issue with elegant verbal trickery, in writing or in person – so

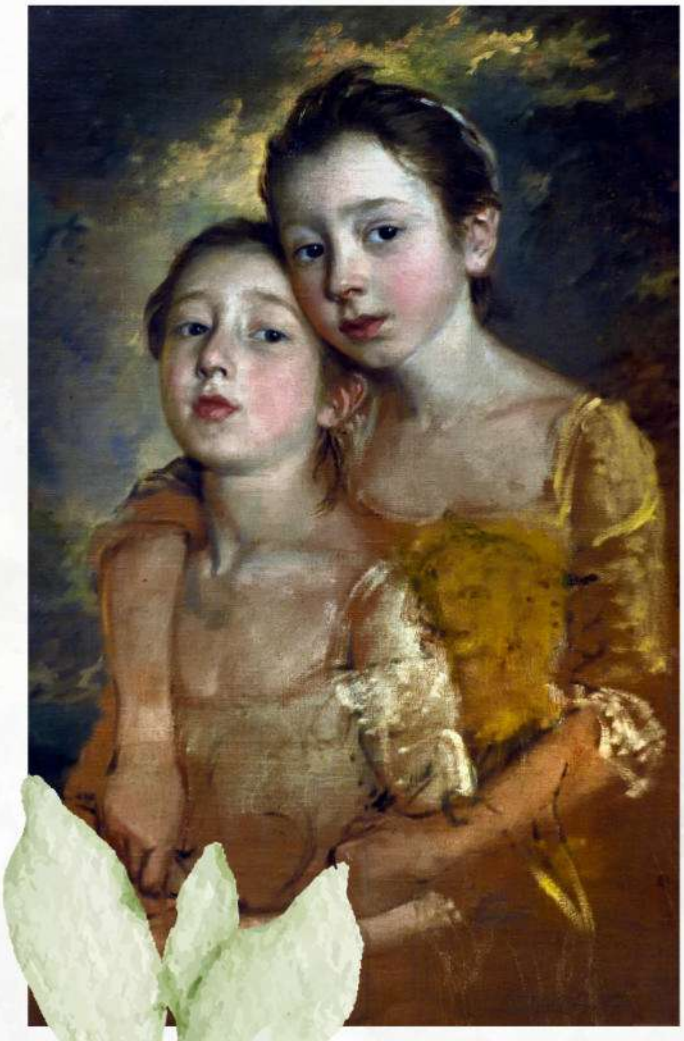
## Rivalry and rapprochement

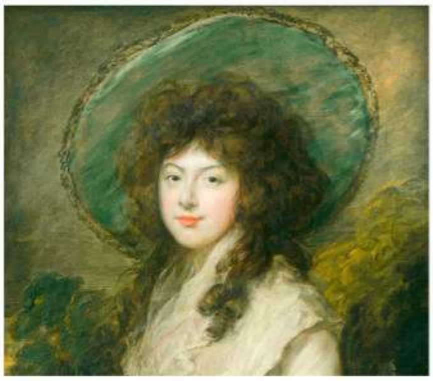
### Gainsborough eventually made peace with his nemesis

Gainsborough and Reynolds were the most popular portraitists of their time and their rivalry was genuine. They stood for different things. Reynolds believed that art should be lofty and grand. It should idealise the imperfect and elevate the viewer. This lifelong bachelor was a calm, placid man – he perhaps didn't feel their rivalry as passionately as Gainsborough did, reserving his only real ire for fashionable society portraitist George Romney, whom he barred from membership of the Royal Academy. Despite never quite losing his provincial Devon accent, Reynolds was cosmopolitan and sophisticated. Gainsborough, on the other hand, was a tradesman's son, married to a woman born in scandalous circumstances, with two daughters who had more than their fair share of drama on the Georgian marriage market. He believed in art being real and true and concerned with the everyday; he described his way of working as "a flash in the pan". Reynolds had been mocked for reusing stiff, classically inspired poses across his portraits.



In later years, Reynolds offered an olive branch, describing Gainsborough's 1782 painting *Girl With Pigs* as "the best picture he ever painted". Its style and subject – a bored peasant child in a rural landscape, feeding piglets – was far outside Reynolds' comfort zone, yet he engaged with and complimented it. In 1788 Gainsborough was dying of cancer and was moved to send a letter to his rival, writing "I can say from a sincere heart that I always admired – and sincerely loved – Sir Joshua Reynolds".



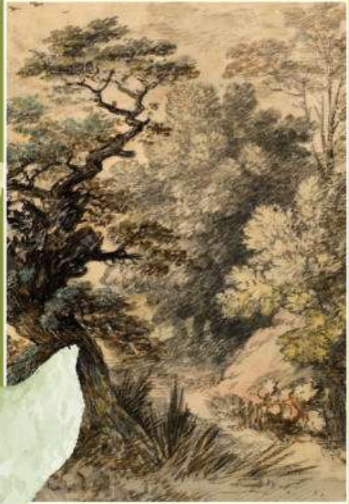


## En plein air

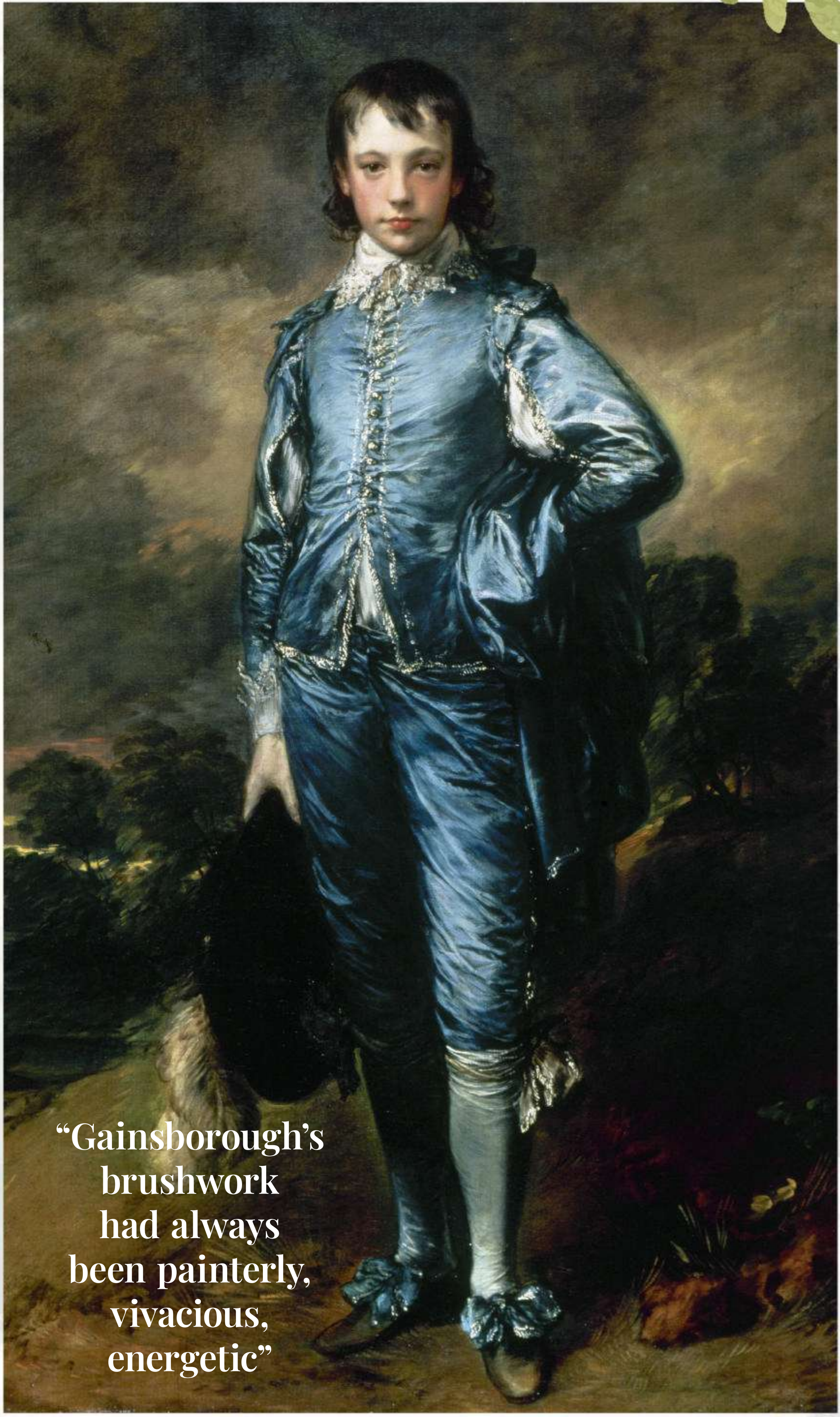
### How Gainsborough transformed painting

Up until the late 18th century, most painters did all of their work in a studio. Gainsborough, however, loved landscapes, and his little tabletop dioramas weren't going to satisfy him forever. He was happiest getting out into the countryside and painting in the open air.

As Gainsborough developed his distinctive style with its iconoclastic painting practices and chaotic brushwork, he became more and more convinced that landscape paintings should try to capture fleeting moments – impressions – of a scene. He was a consummate draughtsman, able to capture a sense of the wind in the trees or the fall of a sunbeam even in sketches, and part of this skill came from his relentless curiosity when out of doors. He observed and drew nature from life, in situ, constantly, believing that the act of drawing helped to fix the behaviour of the natural world in his memory, allowing him to tap into this mental store of scenery when painting in his studio. As the landscapes he loved became more fashionable he began to encourage other artists to do the same. He influenced JMW Turner, who frequently sketched scenes in watercolour on the banks of the Thames. Later, the visual trickery of his painting style, his idea that the artist should aim to capture fleeting moments, and his belief in the importance of painting outside in nature would be key influences on the Impressionists, who passionately encouraged the idea of painting outdoors 'en plein air'.



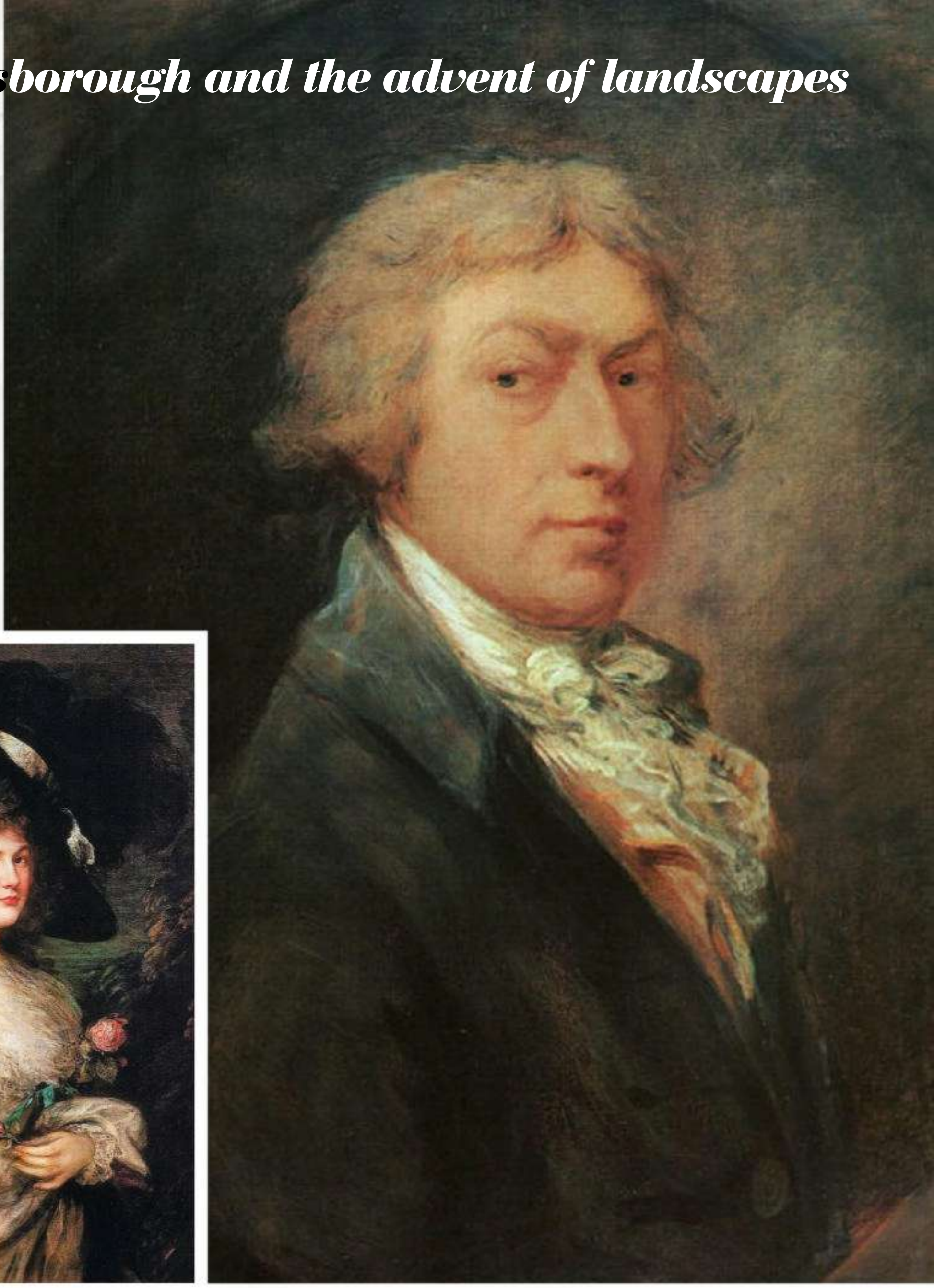
Gainsborough believed that sketching nature out of doors would enable him to reproduce its nuances when it came to full studio paintings

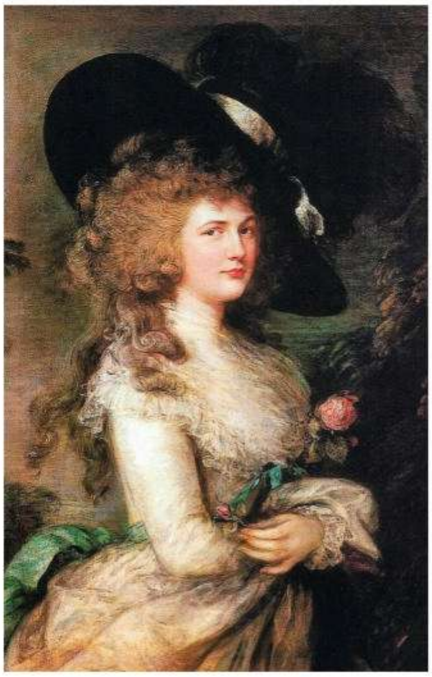


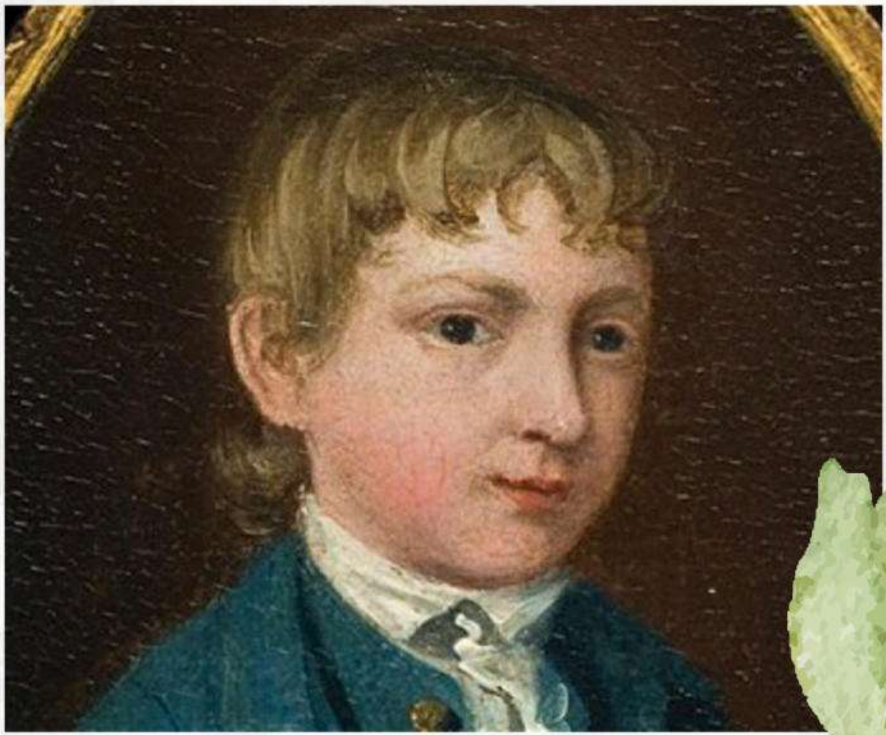
> "Gainsborough's brushwork had always been painterly, vivacious, energetic"

**LEFT** *The Blue Boy* marks the point in Gainsborough's career where he began to reintroduce landscapes into his portraiture as the backdrops

**RIGHT** Gainsborough as he painted himself in the year before his death: a clever, quietly dressed man with a knowing look and a half-hidden sense of humour







**ABOVE LEFT** Despite his love of landscapes Gainsborough became a highly sought-after portraitist. Here he depicts the notorious Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire

**LEFT** This miniature is believed to be a self-portrait by the incredibly talented Gainsborough at the age of ten

he devised a different solution. He adapted his painting style.

Gainsborough's brushwork had always been painterly, vivacious, energetic. Now it became almost frenzied. Up close, his work looked like scribbles. Paint splotched and squiggled; his brush would twist and dance over the canvas, leaving blobs and blotches. He did terrible things to paintbrushes, and worked so fast that he once completed a last-minute commission – a portrait of a young man about to leave home for a naval career – in an hour and a half. He dabbed and dashed, attacking the canvas hungrily and with passion. Raised dollops of oils (called impasto, or 'thick paint') contrasted with thin scraped-out troughs where he used his brush handle to dig out sgraffito ('scratched') lines to reveal the underpainting beneath. The cool, collected Reynolds would have been scandalised if he had seen it. But Gainsborough wasn't deliberately making a mess. At close quarters his canvases may be chaotic, but step away a few feet, sit down so you have to look up at them, and suddenly magic happens. The hectic brushwork, the scrawls and gobbets of paint, resolve themselves into trees and flowers, ruffles and silk, blushing cheeks and limpid eyes. Gainsborough was painting to be skyed; his canvases were now designed to be viewed from below, at a distance, as if they were hung above Royal Academy doors and near Royal Academy ceilings. He had beaten Reynolds at his own game.

By 1774 Gainsborough's portrait work was lucrative enough that he could move his family to London in pursuit of further society commissions, and here, perhaps missing the more accessible countryside near Bath, he had another bright idea. Until that point most Georgian portraits had placed their subject on a plain background – drapery, or a wall, with perhaps a few objects that hinted at their life or career on a table at their elbow. Gainsborough, influenced by the Baroque portraiture of Anthony van Dyck, who painted King Charles I on horseback or hunting on royal parkland, began to paint his sitters in scenes instead. After all, surely the landed gentry wanted to show off their land? They did. Gainsborough had first tried this early in his career with his 1750 painting of newlyweds Mr and Mrs Andrews in the grounds of their Suffolk estate, but 25 years later, now more skilled, more determined, with an instantly recognisable style and a prestigious, wealthy customer base, he was truly able to engage his audience with the idea. The art connoisseurs of Georgian England were finally ready for landscapes.

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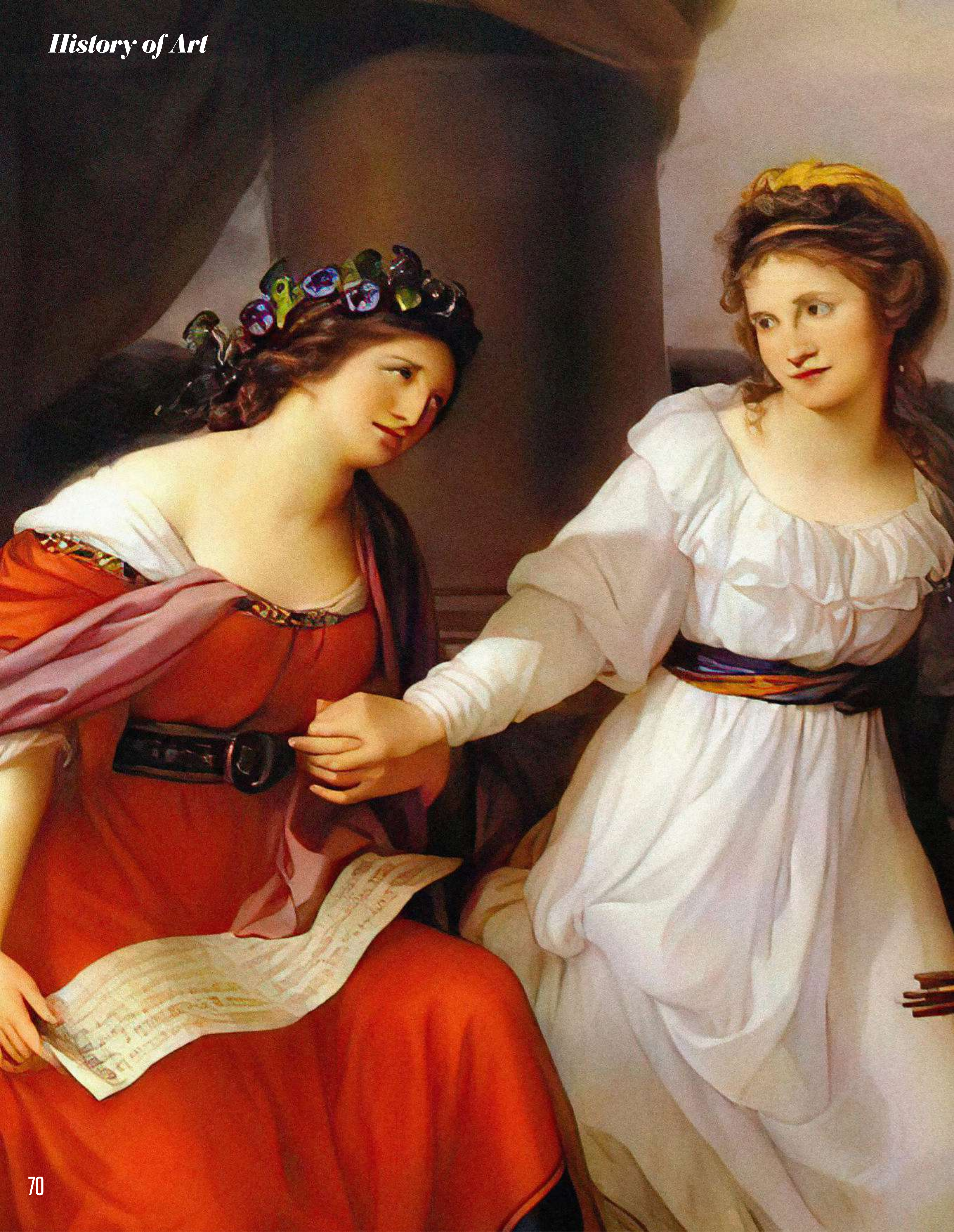

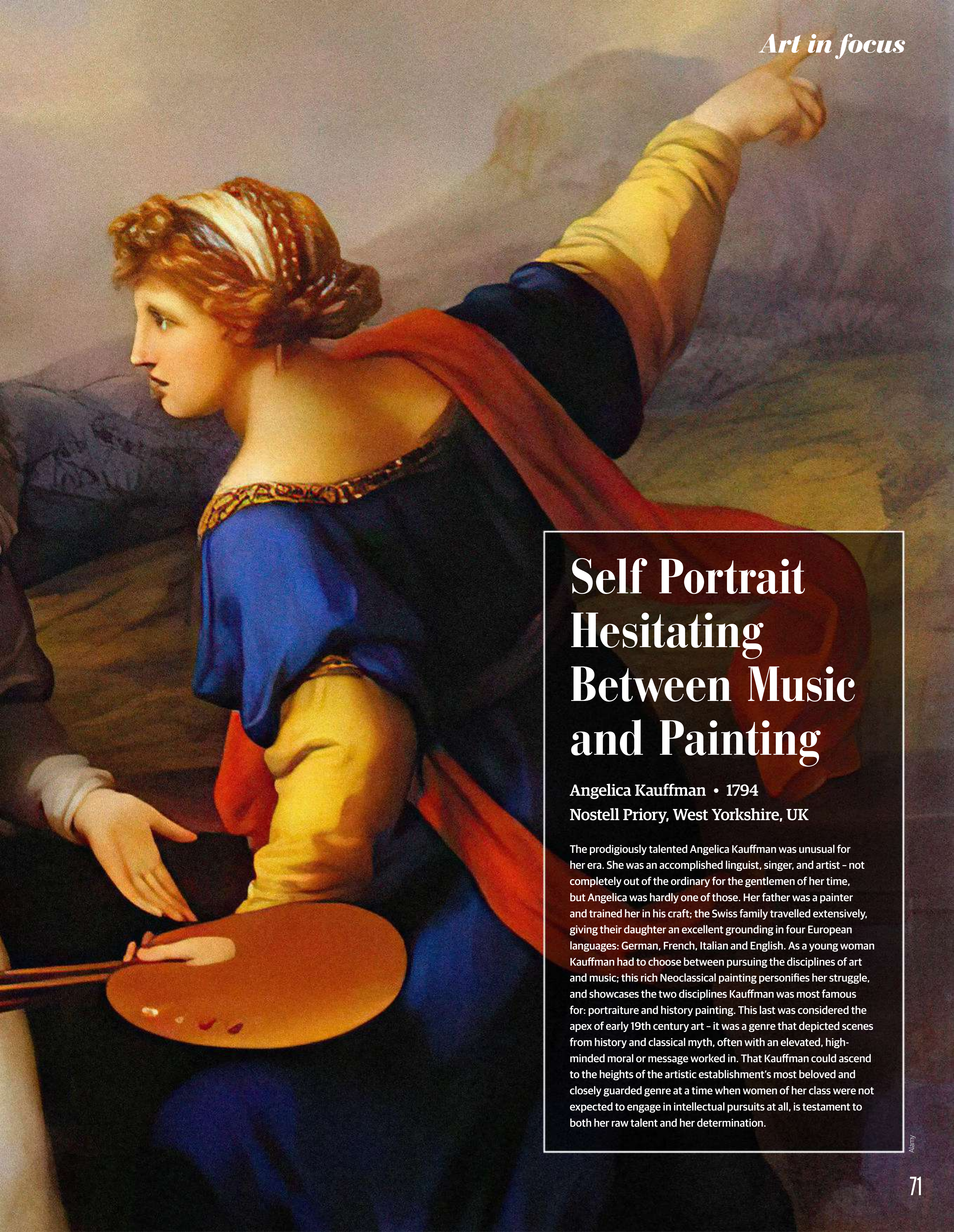

# Self Portrait Hesitating Between Music and Painting

**Angelica Kauffman • 1794**

**Nostell Priory, West Yorkshire, UK**

The prodigiously talented Angelica Kauffman was unusual for her era. She was an accomplished linguist, singer, and artist – not completely out of the ordinary for the gentlemen of her time, but Angelica was hardly one of those. Her father was a painter and trained her in his craft; the Swiss family travelled extensively, giving their daughter an excellent grounding in four European languages: German, French, Italian and English. As a young woman Kauffman had to choose between pursuing the disciplines of art and music; this rich Neoclassical painting personifies her struggle, and showcases the two disciplines Kauffman was most famous for: portraiture and history painting. This last was considered the apex of early 19th century art – it was a genre that depicted scenes from history and classical myth, often with an elevated, high-minded moral or message worked in. That Kauffman could ascend to the heights of the artistic establishment's most beloved and closely guarded genre at a time when women of her class were not expected to engage in intellectual pursuits at all, is testament to both her raw talent and her determination.

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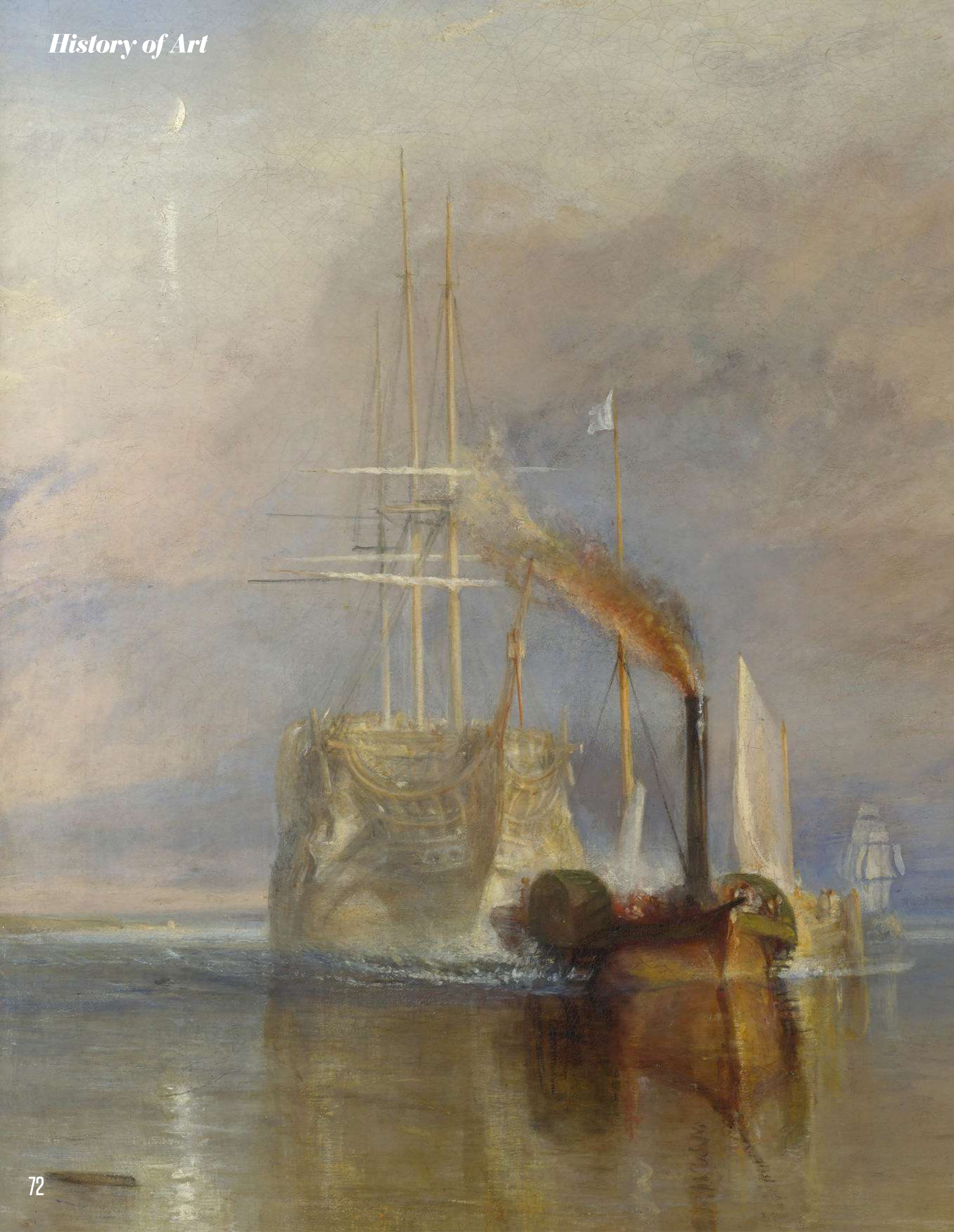

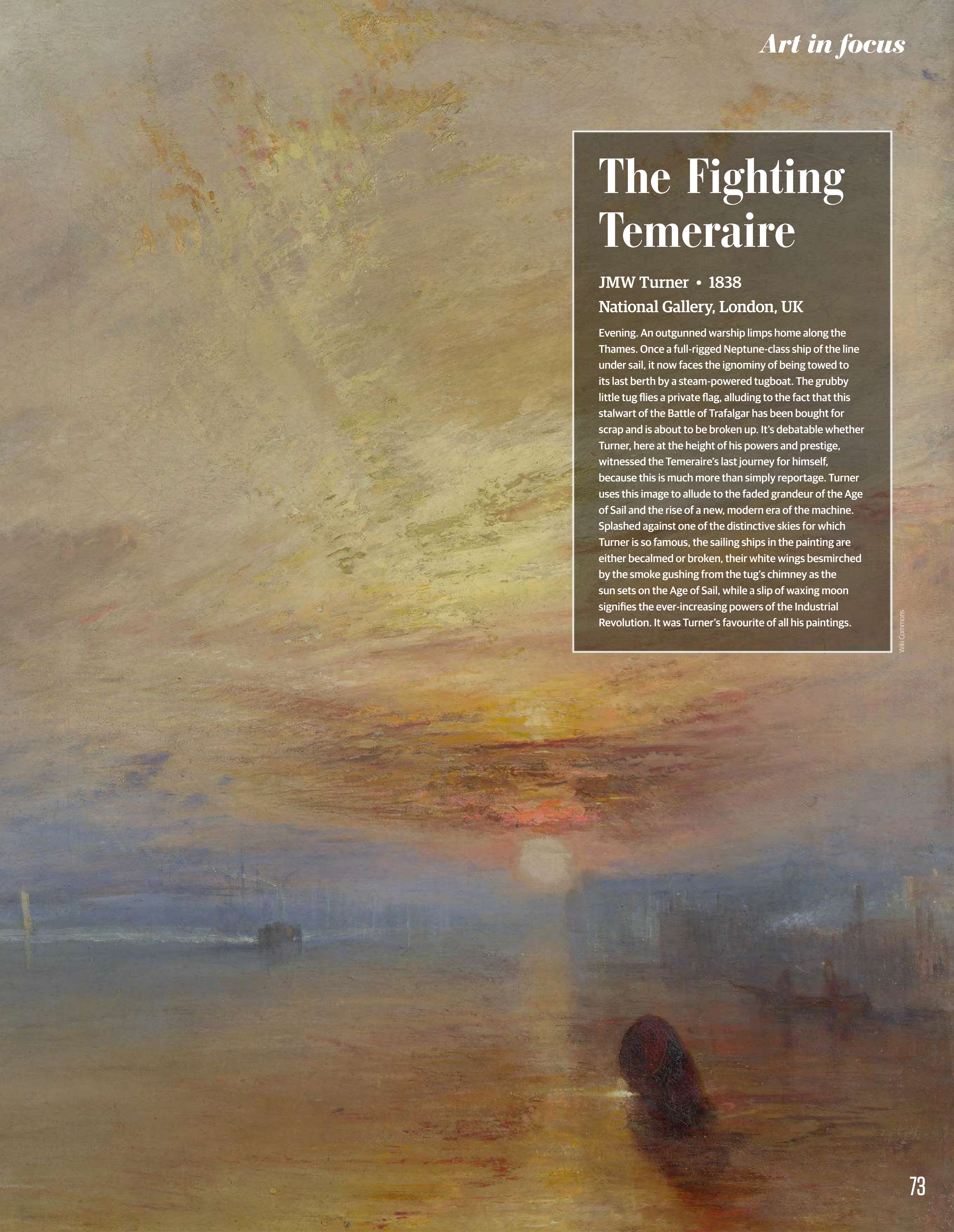

# The Fighting Temeraire

## JMW Turner • 1838

## National Gallery, London, UK

Evening. An outgunned warship limps home along the Thames. Once a full-rigged Neptune-class ship of the line under sail, it now faces the ignominy of being towed to its last berth by a steam-powered tugboat. The grubby little tug flies a private flag, alluding to the fact that this stalwart of the Battle of Trafalgar has been bought for scrap and is about to be broken up. It's debatable whether Turner, here at the height of his powers and prestige, witnessed the Temeraire's last journey for himself, because this is much more than simply reportage. Turner uses this image to allude to the faded grandeur of the Age of Sail and the rise of a new, modern era of the machine. Splashed against one of the distinctive skies for which Turner is so famous, the sailing ships in the painting are either becalmed or broken, their white wings besmirched by the smoke gushing from the tug's chimney as the sun sets on the Age of Sail, while a slip of waxing moon signifies the ever-increasing powers of the Industrial Revolution. It was Turner's favourite of all his paintings.

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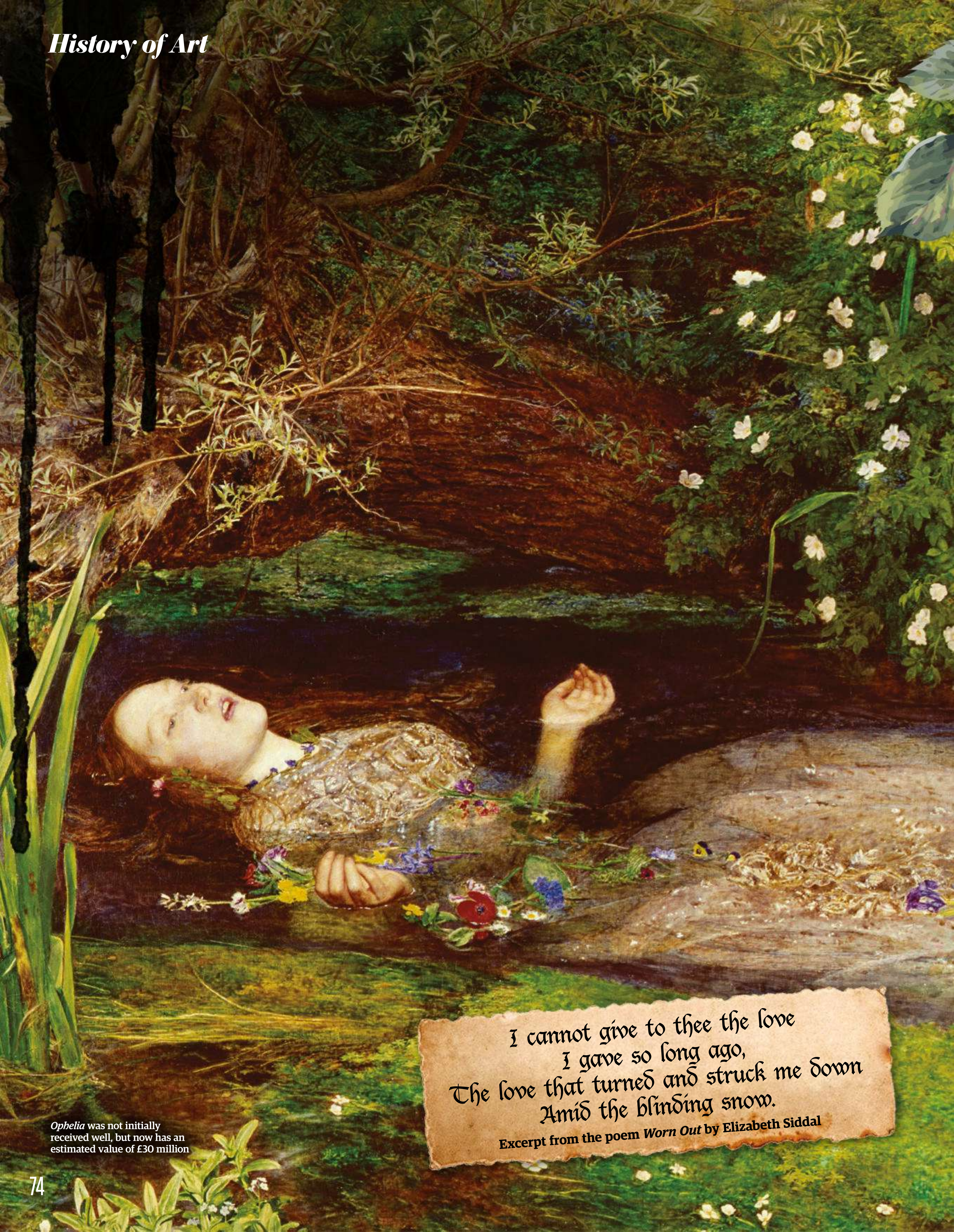


*Ophelia* was not initially received well, but now has an estimated value of £30 million

I cannot give to thee the love
I gave so long ago,
The love that turned and struck me down
Amid the blinding snow.

**Excerpt from the poem *Worn Out* by Elizabeth Siddal**

# The tragic story of Lizzie Siddal

## The original supermodel and face of the Pre-Raphaelites enthralled men, inspired works of art, and left legends of beauty, love and despair in her wake

**Written by Frances White**

John Everett Millais' depiction of *Ophelia* is among the most recognised Pre-Raphaelite paintings in the world. It portrays the last heart-wrenching moments of Shakespeare's tragic heroine. It is unlikely that Elizabeth Siddal, the young, optimistic model, truly understood the depth of Ophelia's suffering. As she posed for the painting she was at the start of her career, her ears were full of promises and her mind brimming with beautiful scenes and enchanting men. However, Lizzie's story, like Ophelia's, was not fated to be one of love, but of longing, tragedy, instability, crushed dreams and ultimately death.

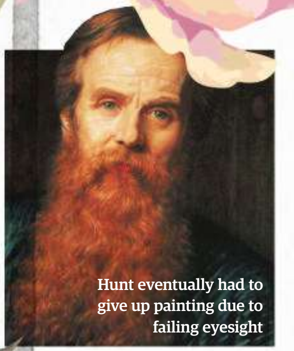
Lizzie's story began at the height of summer in 1829. Like a heroine of many great tales, she came from modest means. Her family were not impoverished but they were far from wealthy. Lizzie's upbringing was not remarkable, but she developed a love of drawing and poetry from an early age. Though she was too poor to be formally educated, she was captivated by the poems of Tennyson, and spent hours daydreaming about a world of excitement, romance and dashing heroes as she gazed over the slum streets of London.

Despite her dreams of adventure beyond the bustling city, Lizzie still had to earn a living, and she found work in a hat shop. It was here that her unusual looks were first noticed. In an era when voluptuous women were regarded as beautiful, she was far from conventionally attractive. She was thin, willowy, with long limbs and a pale complexion. Most peculiar of all was her flaming red hair, which many believed was unlucky. However, it was these unique looks that caught the eye of the promising young artist, Walter Howell Deverell. The painter was seeking a slender woman to model as Viola in his painting of a scene from *Twelfth Night*. Deverell appealed to Lizzie and requested she model for him.

It is unlikely that Lizzie had ever been told she was beautiful – striking perhaps, but never desirable. She probably considered her looks strange, and to be singled out in such a manner was shocking to the unconfident girl. In a family struggling to break through the social ranks, she had been raised to be acutely aware of the impact of her actions. Being a painter's model, as glamorous as it may appear today, was synonymous with prostitution, and Lizzie, as much as she adored art, wanted to protect her reputation at all costs. An ordinary girl would have said no, and it was certainly safer to do so – no meant nothing changed, no meant zero risk. But Lizzie was far from ordinary.

# Inside the secret society

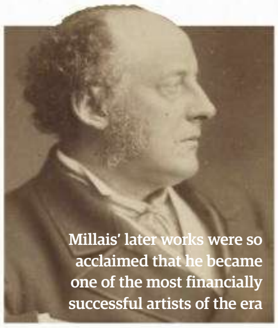
The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood were on a mission to reform art with detail, colours and complexity



Hunt eventually had to give up painting due to failing eyesight

### William Holman Hunt

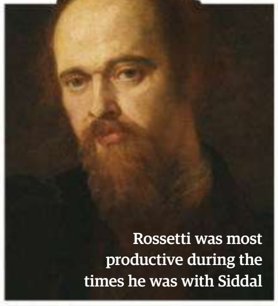
Born the son of a warehouse manager, Hunt was fiercely devoted to his ideas about art, and all of his pieces were incredibly detailed, vividly coloured and featured intense symbolism. Although his early works were criticised, it was with his religious paintings that he became known, such as *The Light Of The World*, which is now displayed in Oxford University.



Millais' later works were so acclaimed that he became one of the most financially successful artists of the era

### John Everett Millais

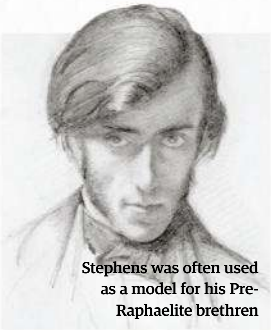
A child prodigy, he showed such incredible skill as to become the youngest ever student to be admitted to the Royal Academy schools at the age of 11. Although he is perhaps the most well-known member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and it was founded in his home, by the 1850s he was moving away from this style to more realistic artwork. His most famous pieces include *Christ In The House Of His Parents* and, of course, *Ophelia*.



Rossetti was most productive during the times he was with Siddal

### Dante Gabriel Rossetti

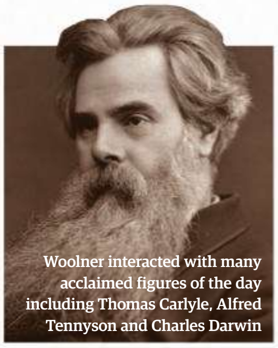
Poet, illustrator and painter, Rossetti was the artistic son of an Italian immigrant but widely respected scholar. He soon befriended Hunt and together with Millais formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Dante frequently intertwined poetry with pictures, writing sonnets to accompany his pieces. In addition to being a lover of art, he also deeply admired women, and his relationships with his three most famous muses are clearly portrayed in his paintings.



Stephens was often used as a model for his Pre-Raphaelite brethren

### Frederic George Stephens

A 'non-artistic' member of the Brotherhood, Stephens was an art critic and main spokesperson for the group. Physically disabled after an accident in his youth, he met Hunt and Millais at the Royal Academy schools and frequently modelled for them. Although he did wish to be an artist, he lost faith in his own ability and took up criticism instead. Despite his claims of having destroyed his paintings, at least three still exist today.



Woolner interacted with many acclaimed figures of the day including Thomas Carlyle, Alfred Tennyson and Charles Darwin

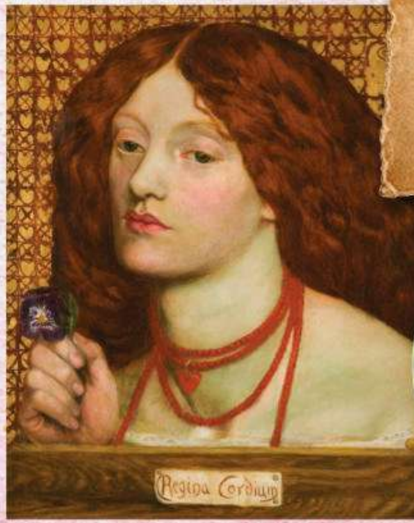
### Thomas Woolner

Woolner was the only sculptor to take his place among the original members of the Brotherhood. Woolner firmly believed that sculpting needed a more vivid form of realism, and also believed that nature should play a key role in creations. Perhaps taking the name of 'brotherhood' too far, Hunt married Woolner's sister-in-law who died in childbirth, only to then marry his other sister-in-law. Woolner accused him of incest and the two never spoke again.

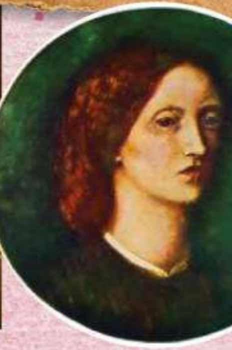
Her first experience of modelling was staggering for the young, naïve girl. For so long she had desired an escape from the drudgery of everyday life. She had dreamt of a poetic existence of art and splendour and for the first time in her young life she was the focus, not because of her strange red hair, but because she was adored, unique and captivating. Deverell, like many others after him, was completely enthralled by Lizzie, and his gushing compliments of the new model he had plucked from obscurity ensured her entry into the world of the Pre-Raphaelites.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, despite the somewhat stuffy name, was far from boring. Its seven members were young, handsome, exciting and truly passionate about art. They were the rebels of the art world, daring to defy tradition and, to the chagrin of their older peers, believed that art had become dry, boring and unappealing. They wanted it to be robust, colourful, sublime and dramatic. For a while they operated privately, secretly signing the initials PRB into their canvases, but when the truth was revealed they faced a brutal backlash and criticism for their arrogance. It was an incredibly dynamic era of art, where the young dared to question the old, and youthful Lizzie Siddal found herself thrust into the centre of it.

One member in particular took a shine to Lizzie; Dante Gabriel Rossetti was passionate, from an Italian family, had flowing black hair and dark, penetrating eyes. Charismatic, charming and brimming with fervour, he was the sun that the other painters revolved around. Lizzie was instantly smitten with the fiery artist and the two began what would become an intense, ecstatic and ultimately traumatising relationship.



> Hallow hearts are ever near me,
> Soulless eyes have ceased to cheer me:
> Lord may I come to thee?
>
> **Excerpt from the poem *Lord May I Come?* by Elizabeth Siddal**



**ABOVE LEFT** Rossetti painted this piece as a marriage portrait for his wife, her vibrant red hair and regal pose demonstrating his adoration for Lizzie

**ABOVE** Lizzie's self-portrait demonstrates how differently she perceived herself compared to the artists that painted her

Many believe that their love was doomed from the start. There was a huge gulf between their financial and social standing and as much as Rossetti liked to paint himself the dashing hero, he was embarrassed by the situation. Unable to face the backlash from his family, he hid his lover away and the two lived in their own little bubble. For Rossetti this was perfect – obsessed with the tragic love of the Italian poet Dante and his muse Beatrice, he desired his own complicated, painful romance to fuel his art, and that is exactly what he ended up with.

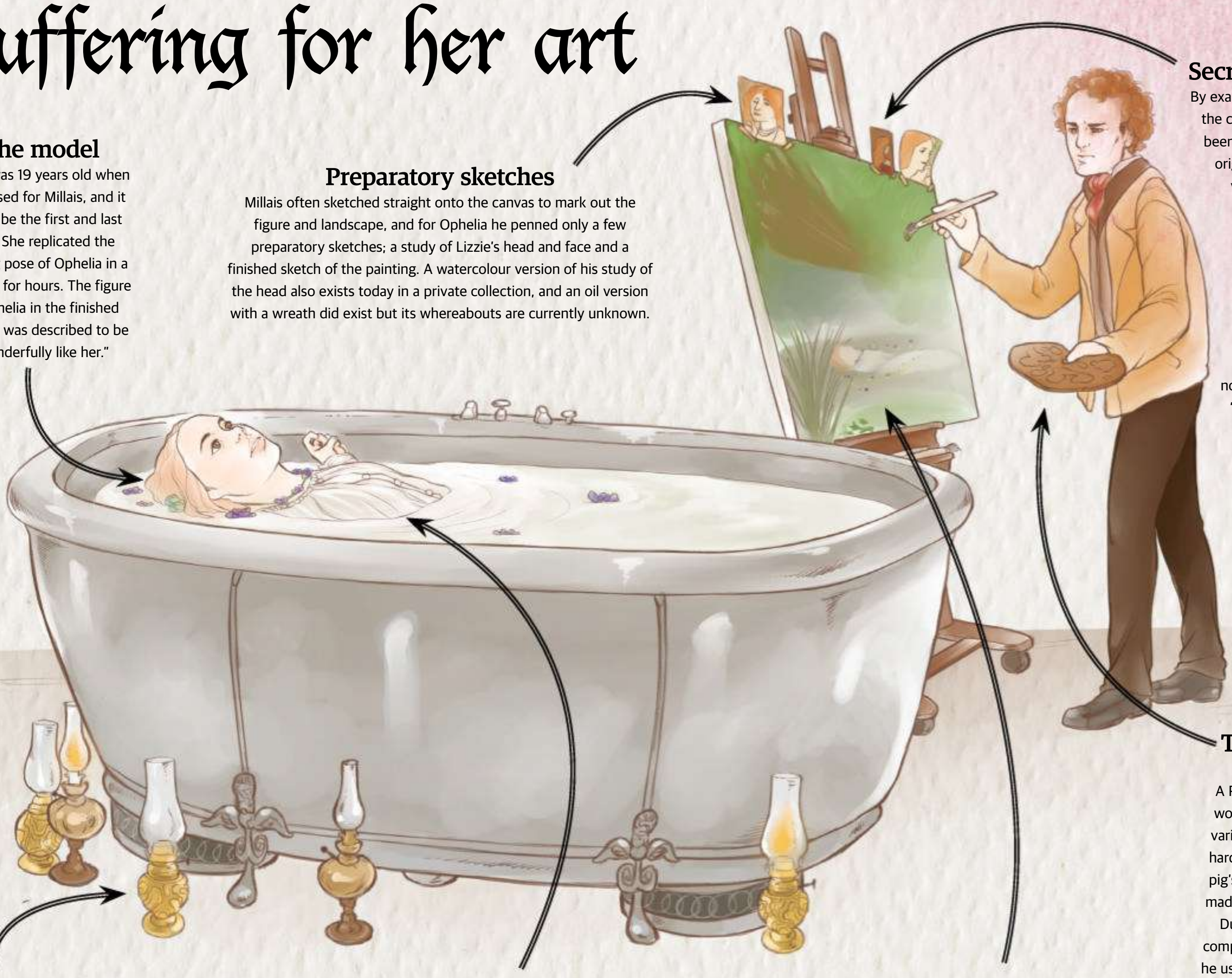
Lizzie was more than Rossetti's muse, she influenced every aspect of his painting and after their introduction, she featured in almost all of his pieces. His fellow Brotherhood members were just as taken with her, and she was in high demand among the talented artists. For a 'plain' shop girl this was beyond a dream, she had become a beautiful nymph, a figure from legend to be admired and adored. Modelling for Lizzie was far from just a money grab; she was completely intoxicated with her new life and the vision of beauty she had become.

These early days of modelling were the happiest of Lizzie's life, and if things had remained the same, her story would be one of love and joy. However, it was not meant to be. Lizzie's dream first began to fade when a new model became the favourite of the group; Annie Miller was a busty, sexy, working-class girl who couldn't have been more different from Lizzie. Lizzie's fragile self-esteem wasn't helped by the fact that, because of the bad press surrounding the group, the paintings of her had been criticised and her appearance insulted.

When Rossetti requested Lizzie model only for him she, completely addicted to his attention, agreed and gave up her day job. Despite her brash show of commitment, Rossetti did not reciprocate. He was still unwilling to admit the nature of their relationship publicly, while behind closed doors he lovingly called her 'dove' and whispered promises of eternity. Lizzie had given up everything for the passionate man, but she was terrified he would leave her. For someone usually so measured, she felt humiliated by letting herself get swept away in the glamour and excitement. She had begun as Rossetti's adored model, but his neighbours gossiped that she was his 'mistress' and Lizzie was beginning to fear this was true.

Lizzie's own declining health did not help her fears of abandonment and her increasing reliance on laudanum had a disastrous effect on her health. Use of the painkiller was commonplace, but when combined with Lizzie's tendency for depressive periods, it was incredibly dangerous. She had not received much love or attention in her life, and now she had tasted it, it was all she wanted. Although Rossetti would often rush to her side, at other times he was simply too busy to be with her, and Lizzie would lay suffering in bed as he socialised with the family that hated her and friends that thought her a cheap harlot.

## Suffering for her art



### The model

Lizzie was 19 years old when she posed for Millais, and it would be the first and last time. She replicated the floating pose of Ophelia in a bathtub for hours. The figure of Ophelia in the finished portrait was described to be "wonderfully like her."

### Preparatory sketches

Millais often sketched straight onto the canvas to mark out the figure and landscape, and for Ophelia he penned only a few preparatory sketches; a study of Lizzie's head and face and a finished sketch of the painting. A watercolour version of his study of the head also exists today in a private collection, and an oil version with a wreath did exist but its whereabouts are currently unknown.

### Secret sketches

By examining the frame at the curved edges, it has been revealed that Millais originally added a water vole to the painting, edited it out, added it again and finally removed it after discussing it with a friend. Sketches of birds have also been revealed as well as what appear to be notes to himself such as "55 Chancing Lane."

### Tools of the trade

A Pre-Raphaelite artist would have access to a variety of brushes, from hard brushes made from pig's hair to soft brushes made from squirrel's tails. Due to the detail and complexity of Millais' work he used small, fine brushes to apply oil paints. He also used a palette made from porcelain to mix colours.

### Improvised heating

As Millais was painting during the cold winter, the water in the bathtub was kept warm by oil lamps placed underneath it. However, Millais was so engrossed by his painting that he didn't notice the lamps go out, and Lizzie did not complain. She became ill as a result and her father demanded Millais pay her medical bills.

### Ophelia's gown

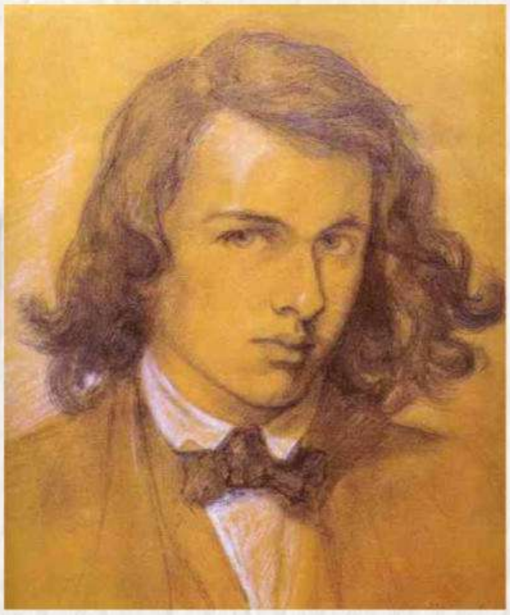
Millais purchased the dress worn by Lizzie from a second-hand shop. The fine silver embroidered dress cost the princely sum of £4, approximately £250 today. Millais later wrote that "I have purchased a really splendid lady's ancient dress… you may imagine it is something rather good when I tell you it cost me, old and dirty as it is, four pounds."

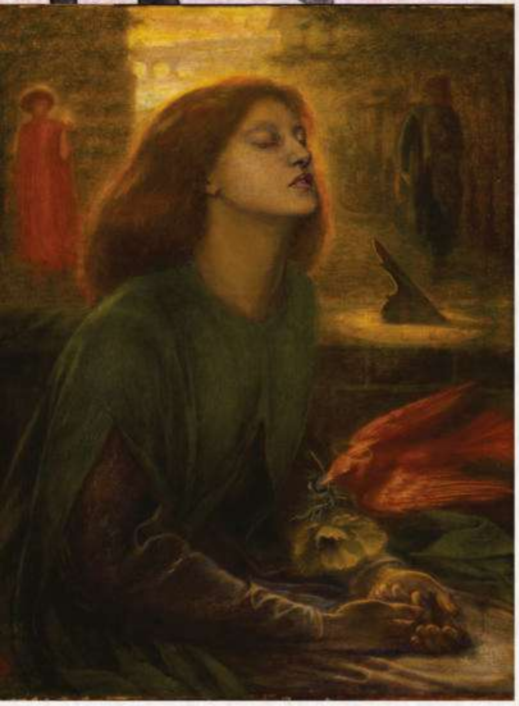
### The landscape painting

Unusually for the era, Millais finished the landscape section of the painting first, spending several months painting in the open air. The Pre-Raphaelites thought that the landscape was just as important as the figure, which was commonly believed to be the central focus of paintings and usually completed first.

Oh never weep for love that's dead
Since love is seldom true
But changes his fashion from blue to red,
From brightest red to blue,
And love was born to an early death
And is so seldom true.

**Excerpt from the poem *Dead Love* by Elizabeth Siddal**





**ABOVE RIGHT** Rossetti went on to have two other muses after Lizzie's death, Fanny Cornforth and Jane Morris

**LEFT** A year after Lizzie's death, Rossetti painted *Beata Beatrix*, featuring Lizzie as Dante's tragic Beatrix

However, the redheaded beauty was also fiery and determined, and she poured her complex emotions into drawing and painting. Her works mesmerised John Ruskin who immediately bought her entire collection. For a woman of her time it was an astounding achievement, but it was not enough to impress Rossetti's parents. Regardless of how hard she worked, how much she earned and how dearly she loved their son, Lizzie could not escape her low birth. She never desired riches - the poems she adored and the paintings she posed for were tales of love - it was this that Lizzie wanted most. Without it she spiralled further into depression and addiction.

During a trip to Paris to help her health, Lizzie's worst fears were confirmed. Rossetti, the man who had idolised and claimed her for his own, had an affair with Annie Miller. It was an act that would have prompted many women to end such a relationship, but Rossetti's hold on Lizzie was unbreakable. She simply couldn't leave him, because every part of her - her ruined reputation, her image, her soul - belonged to him entirely.

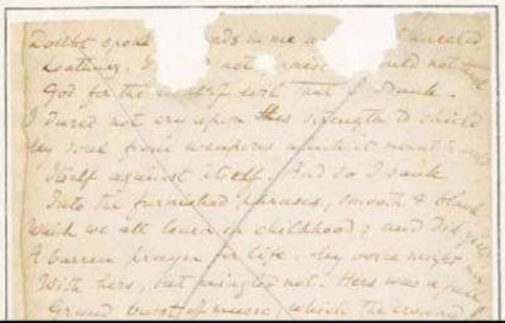
All Lizzie desired was to be with Rossetti, and more than anything she wished for him to proclaim it publicly in marriage. On several occasions, when Lizzie became strong and stubborn and threatened to break off the relationship, he ran to her and made endless promises of union and, like an addict, Lizzie went back for more. Time and time again he broke his promises. On several occasions Lizzie held her own health hostage to manipulate and blackmail him, refusing to eat, laying in bed for days and flying into such fiery rages that she collapsed. Rossetti, truly convinced that she would leave for good, begged his friends for money for a marriage license. Lizzie, delighted, returned to him, only for Rossetti to squander the money elsewhere. For the woman who had sacrificed everything and desired only one thing in return it

## Words from beyond the grave

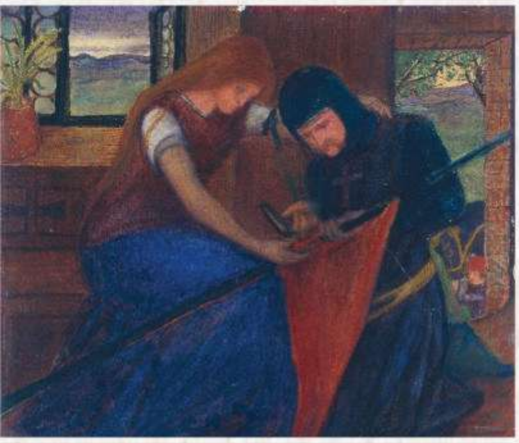
As complex and tragic as their love may have been, Rossetti adored his wife and when she died, he buried another one of his great loves - his poetry. He slipped the book in her fiery red locks as she lay in her coffin. Seven years later, however, Rossetti was battling his own demons. Dangerously addicted to drugs and alcohol, he was convinced that he was going blind, and had left his brushes untouched. He decided to focus on his poetry and became determined to retrieve his book, hidden in the hair of his dead lover. Desperate, he had his agent, Charles Augustus Howell arrange an exhumation.

The deed was carried out in the dead of night, but Rossetti found the prospect of gazing upon the face he had painted countless times in a state of decay unbearable, and did not attend. Howell, who did, claimed that Lizzie was perfectly preserved and her coffin was filled with her flowing locks. This legend of Lizzie's pristine and beautiful corpse has continued to grow over time.

Howell, however, was a notorious fraud and a liar, and it is likely he had a personal motive in mind when retelling this scene. Perhaps he sought to thrill his client, an avid believer in the supernatural, or even to gloss over the hideousness of the entire situation. Again, Lizzie became a character from fantasy, and even in death, her humanity stripped away for a beautiful, but ultimately untrue, image. This did little to ease Rossetti's guilt, the poems themselves were not well received, and he experienced a mental breakdown that only hastened his death.



The poems themselves were not well preserved, and a worm had got into the book, making pages hard to read



was a horrendously painful existence, and one she described in her own poetry as "a living death."

It took until Lizzie was on the brink of actual death for Rossetti to finally make a serious proposal. After running away to Derbyshire in a bold attempt to leave the world of Rossetti and art behind, Lizzie discovered his affections for another new woman and fell dangerously ill. Her fragile body had been destroyed by her reliance on laudanum and she was bedbound. Barely able to move, she vomited constantly and was afflicted with such extreme pain she longed for death. Rossetti was struck by encompassing feelings of guilt and became obsessed with marrying Lizzie at the one time in her life she felt no desire for it. After months of pain and illness, she finally recovered enough to make the journey to church and they were married in May 1860. There was no grand occasion and no friends or family were present. It was, as it had always been, Lizzie and Rossetti only.

After a whirlwind honeymoon, Lizzie finally began to live her dream. The couple enjoyed their married life, and soon enough the new bride fell pregnant. Together they transformed their house into one that was fit for a child and, with the prospect of a baby on the way, Rossetti's family even began to warm to Lizzie. However, as in all instances where she had dared to dream for more, her world fell apart. The child she birthed was stillborn and it destroyed Lizzie, Rossetti and their relationship for good.

Lizzie's depression after the death of her unborn child was severe and laudanum became her only source of comfort. She would stare at the fire for hours, refused to eat anything, and even sat beside the empty cradle, gently rocking it. With no energy remaining to paint or to model, everything became a symbol for loss – the empty cradle, the blank canvas, the wandering eyes of her lover. Even when she fell pregnant again, she could no longer allow herself to believe that she could be happy.

All it took was for Rossetti to go off on an unscheduled errand for Lizzie to think he was having another affair, that she would be abandoned again, that she would be nothing again, and she was nothing; a model without a painter, a wife without a husband, and a mother without a child. When he returned home he found an empty bottle of laudanum and a rumoured suicide note. Lizzie was unconscious in bed, and did not stir when he tried to wake her. After destroying the note he called a doctor, when he was unable to help he called another, then another. Desperate and grief-stricken, the painter was unable to save his wife and on 11 February 1862, Lizzie was pronounced dead. She was a mere 32 years old, pregnant and, even in death, still oddly beautiful.

Though some of Rossetti's friends were genuinely sad for the loss, others were relieved the talented artist was free of such a fiery and troublesome woman. For many, Lizzie was simply a cheap harlot, a mistress, and a pauper who dared to dream above her station. In the years to come she would be painted as a victim, a fragile flower and a murdered lover. Rumours persisted that it had been Rossetti who had killed his wife deliberately, forcing her to drink the final vial of laudanum that claimed her life. Rossetti did indeed drain the life of his tragic muse – not by one dramatic force-feeding incident, but gradually over a decade of love, passion, broken vows and tragedy.

## Laudanum

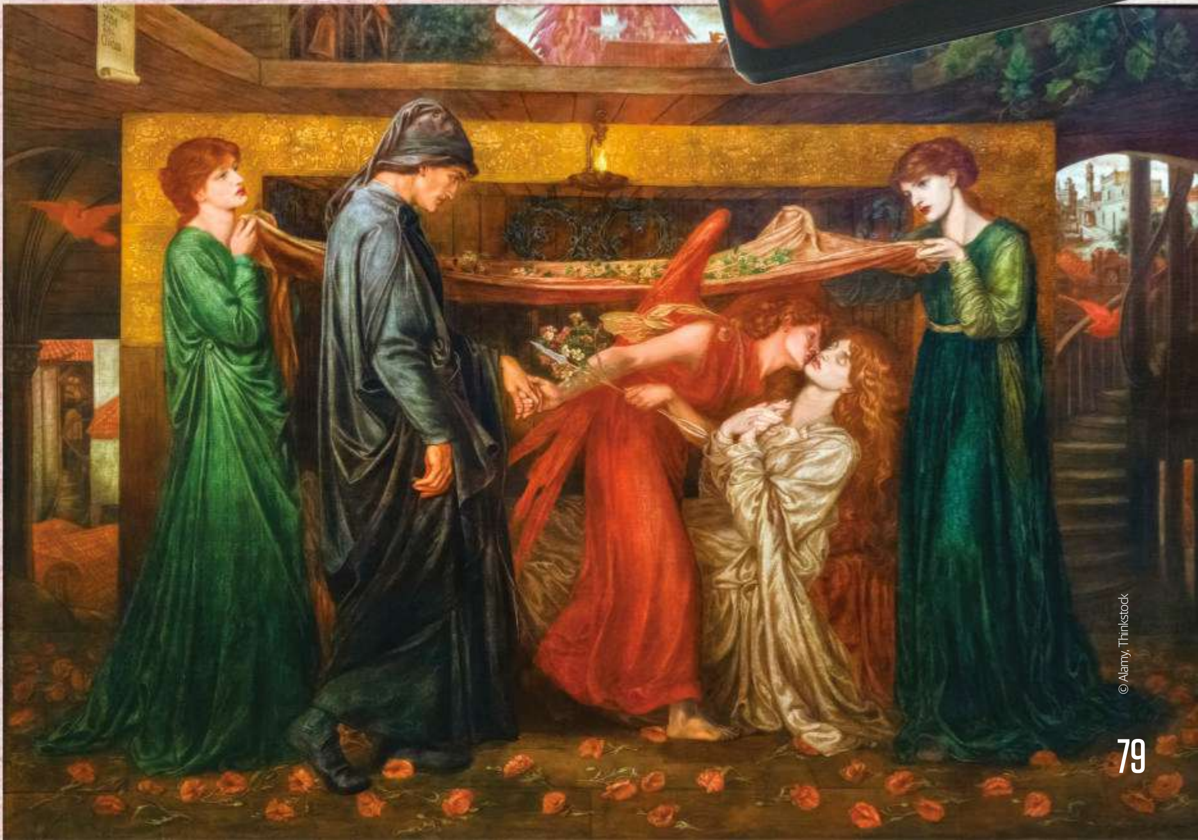
### The Victorian drug of choice

Often thought of as a Victorian vice, laudanum contained 90 per cent alcohol and 10 per cent opium and was primarily used in pharmaceuticals. It was often administered as a painkiller to treat anything from the common cold to heart disease, which has earned it the nickname 'aspirin of the 19th century.' Not only was it on the shelves of chemist shops, but doctors would also prescribe it to patients, particularly women suffering with menstrual cramps. Laudanum quickly became the drug of choice among the Romantic-era writers such as Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Byron and Dickens. Another famous user was Arthur Conan Doyle and his famous literary creation, Sherlock Holmes. However, it was fashionable and dangerous in equal measure. The potent morphine it contained produced feelings of euphoria when ingested and people quickly became dependent, but a by-product of this was dysphoria or depression. Despite its serious symptoms, the use of opium was not prohibited until 1928.

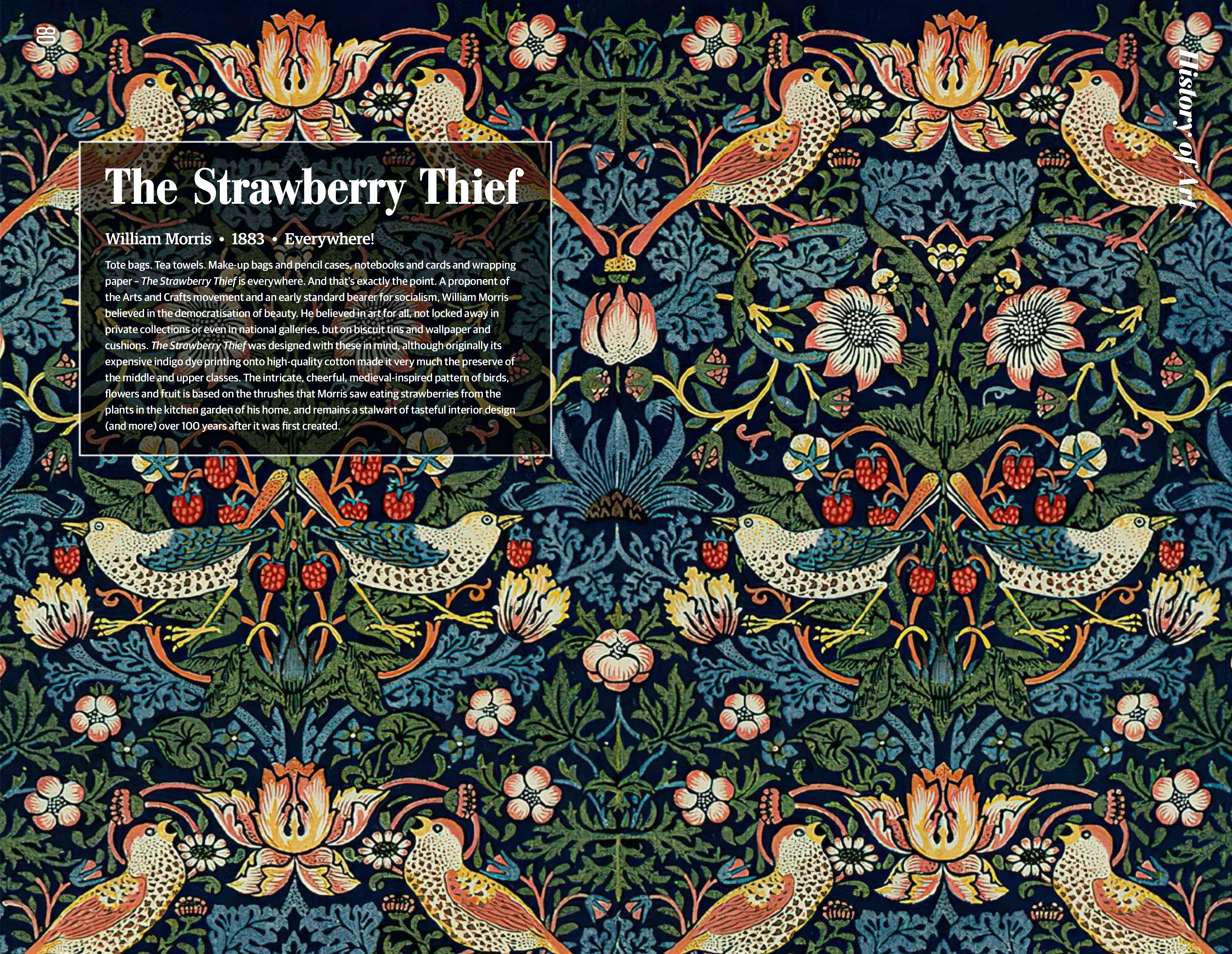
POISON

**ABOVE LEFT** Like many of Lizzie's paintings, *Lady Affixing Pennant to a Knight's Spear* had influences from Arthurian legend

**BELOW** In *Dante's Dream*, Rossetti retouched the hair of model Jane Morris, so it was red, like Lizzie's



© Alamy, Thinkstock

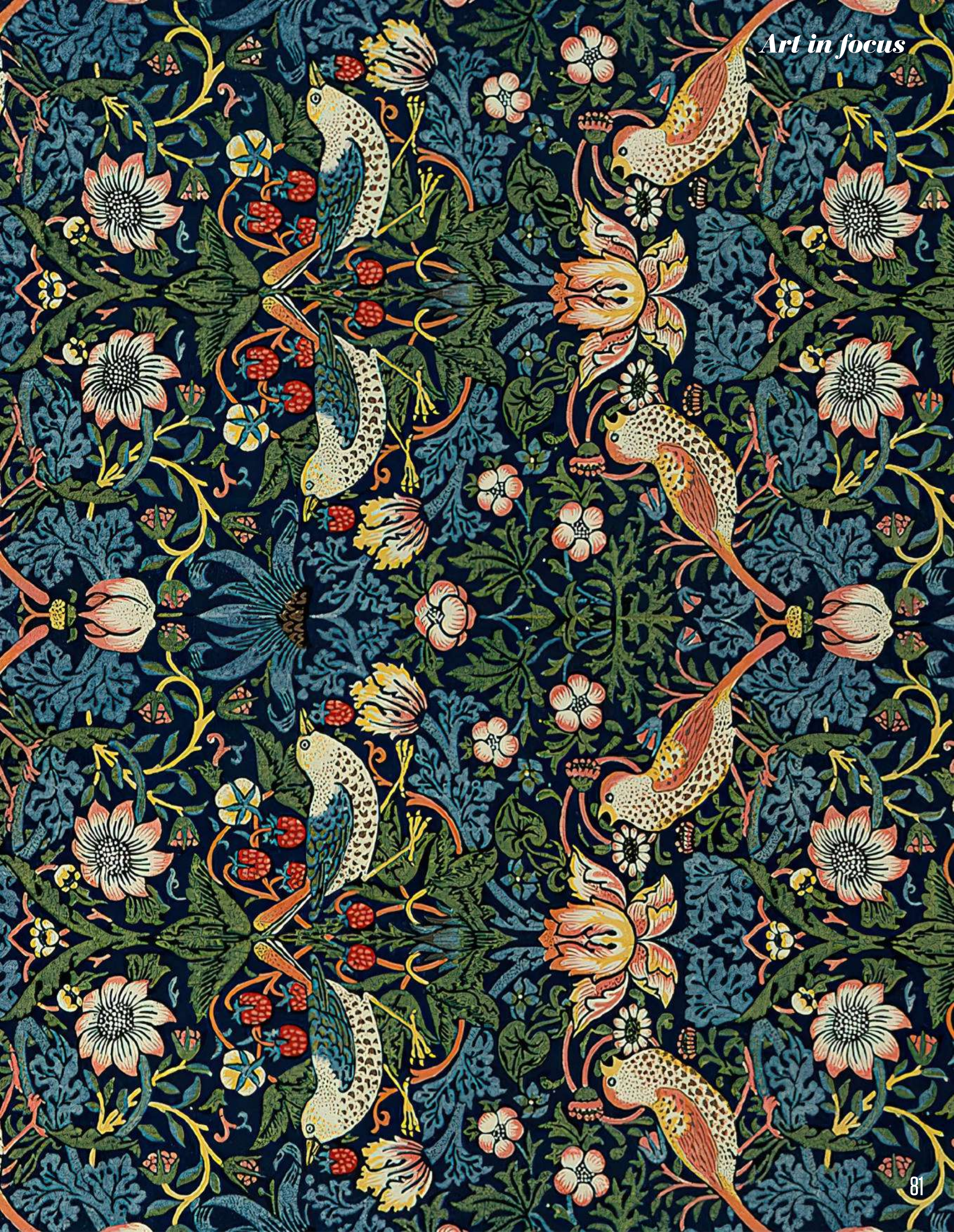


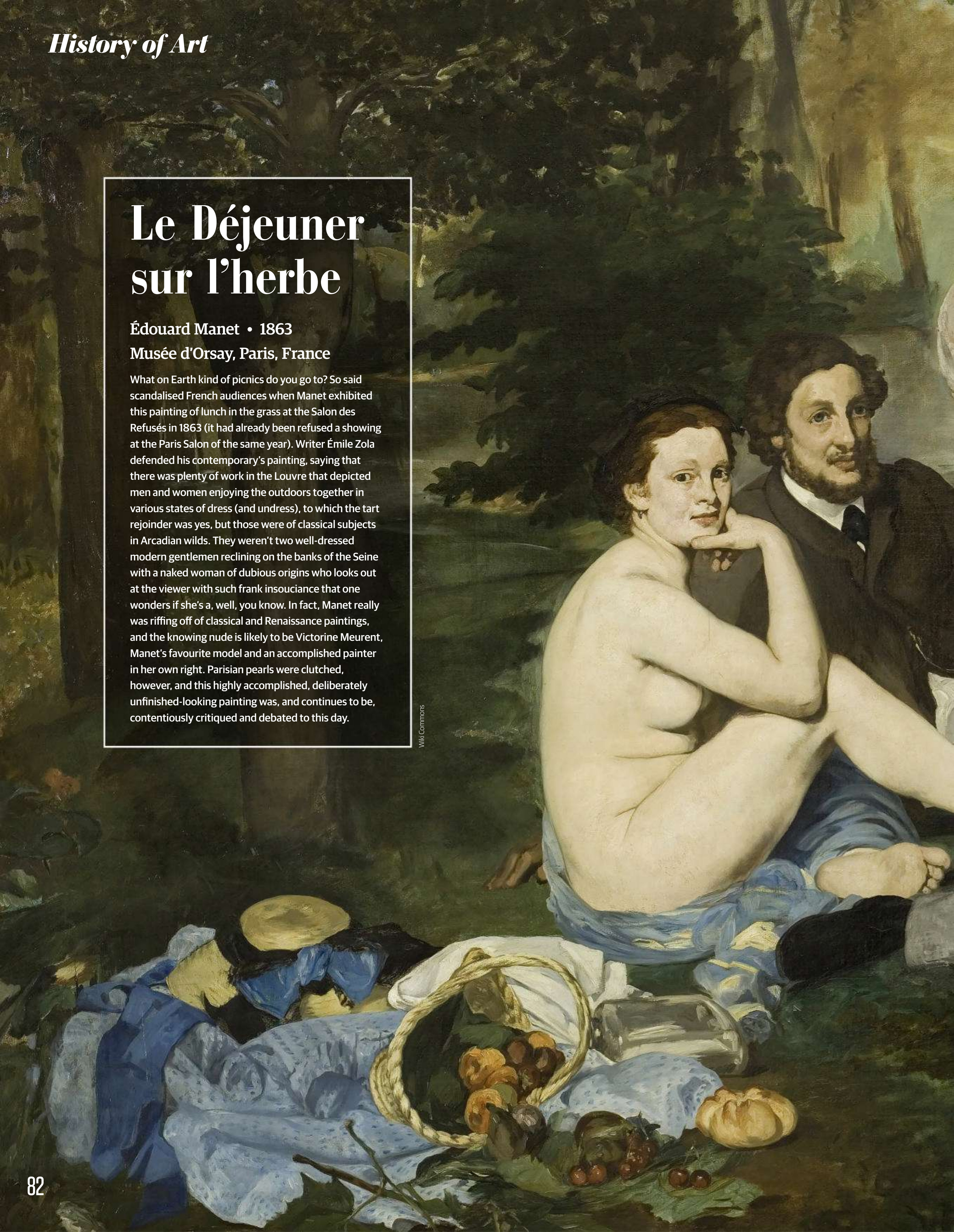
GettyImages

# The Strawberry Thief

## William Morris • 1883 • Everywhere!

Tote bags. Tea towels. Make-up bags and pencil cases, notebooks and cards and wrapping paper – *The Strawberry Thief* is everywhere. And that's exactly the point. A proponent of the Arts and Crafts movement and an early standard bearer for socialism, William Morris believed in the democratisation of beauty. He believed in art for all, not locked away in private collections or even in national galleries, but on biscuit tins and wallpaper and cushions. *The Strawberry Thief* was designed with these in mind, although originally its expensive indigo dye printing onto high-quality cotton made it very much the preserve of the middle and upper classes. The intricate, cheerful, medieval-inspired pattern of birds, flowers and fruit is based on the thrushes that Morris saw eating strawberries from the plants in the kitchen garden of his home, and remains a stalwart of tasteful interior design (and more) over 100 years after it was first created.





# Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe

### Édouard Manet • 1863

### Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France

What on Earth kind of picnics do you go to? So said scandalised French audiences when Manet exhibited this painting of lunch in the grass at the Salon des Refusés in 1863 (it had already been refused a showing at the Paris Salon of the same year). Writer Émile Zola defended his contemporary's painting, saying that there was plenty of work in the Louvre that depicted men and women enjoying the outdoors together in various states of dress (and undress), to which the tart rejoinder was yes, but those were of classical subjects in Arcadian wilds. They weren't two well-dressed modern gentlemen reclining on the banks of the Seine with a naked woman of dubious origins who looks out at the viewer with such frank insouciance that one wonders if she's a, well, you know. In fact, Manet really was riffing off of classical and Renaissance paintings, and the knowing nude is likely to be Victorine Meurent, Manet's favourite model and an accomplished painter in her own right. Parisian pearls were clutched, however, and this highly accomplished, deliberately unfinished-looking painting was, and continues to be, contentiously critiqued and debated to this day.

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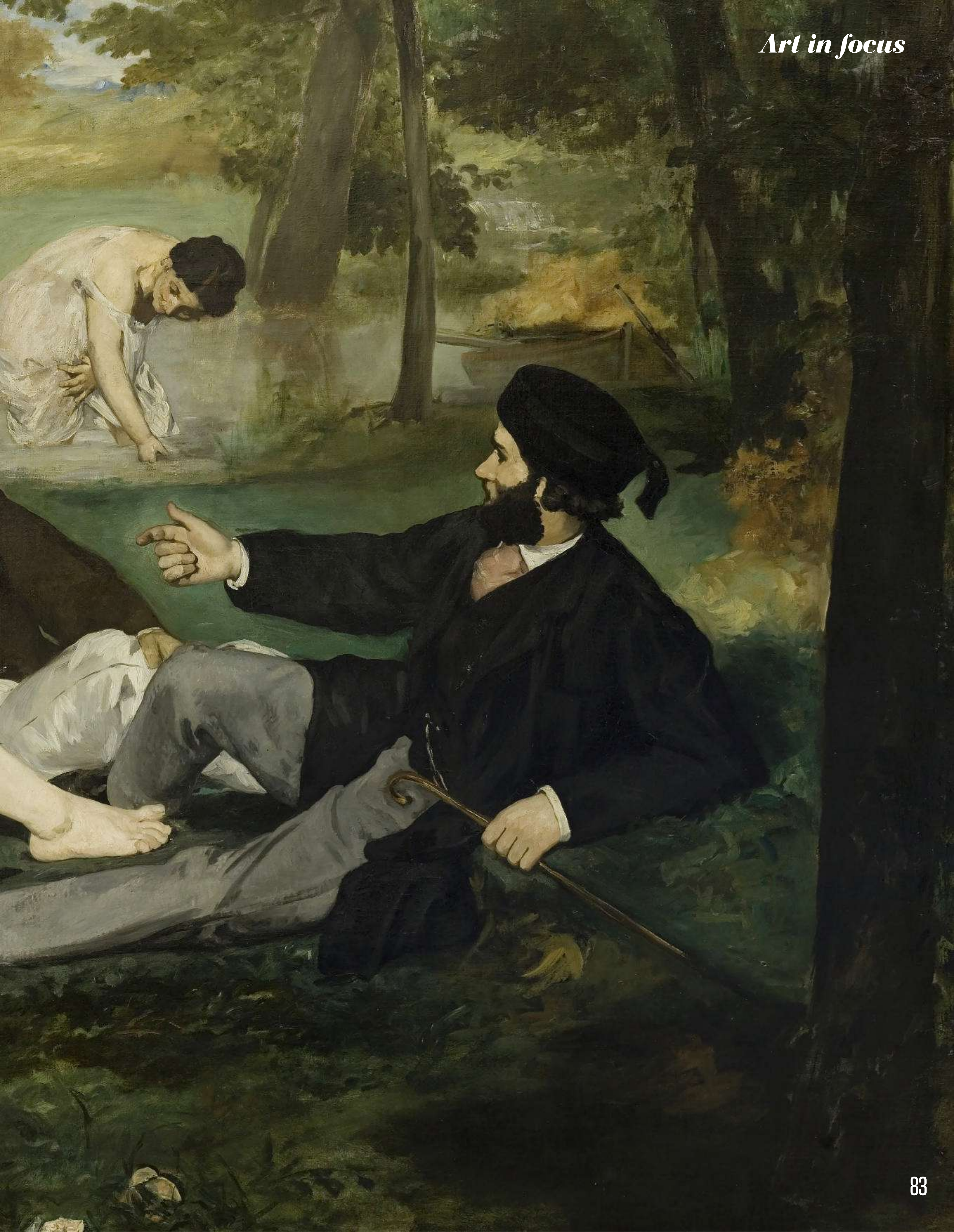
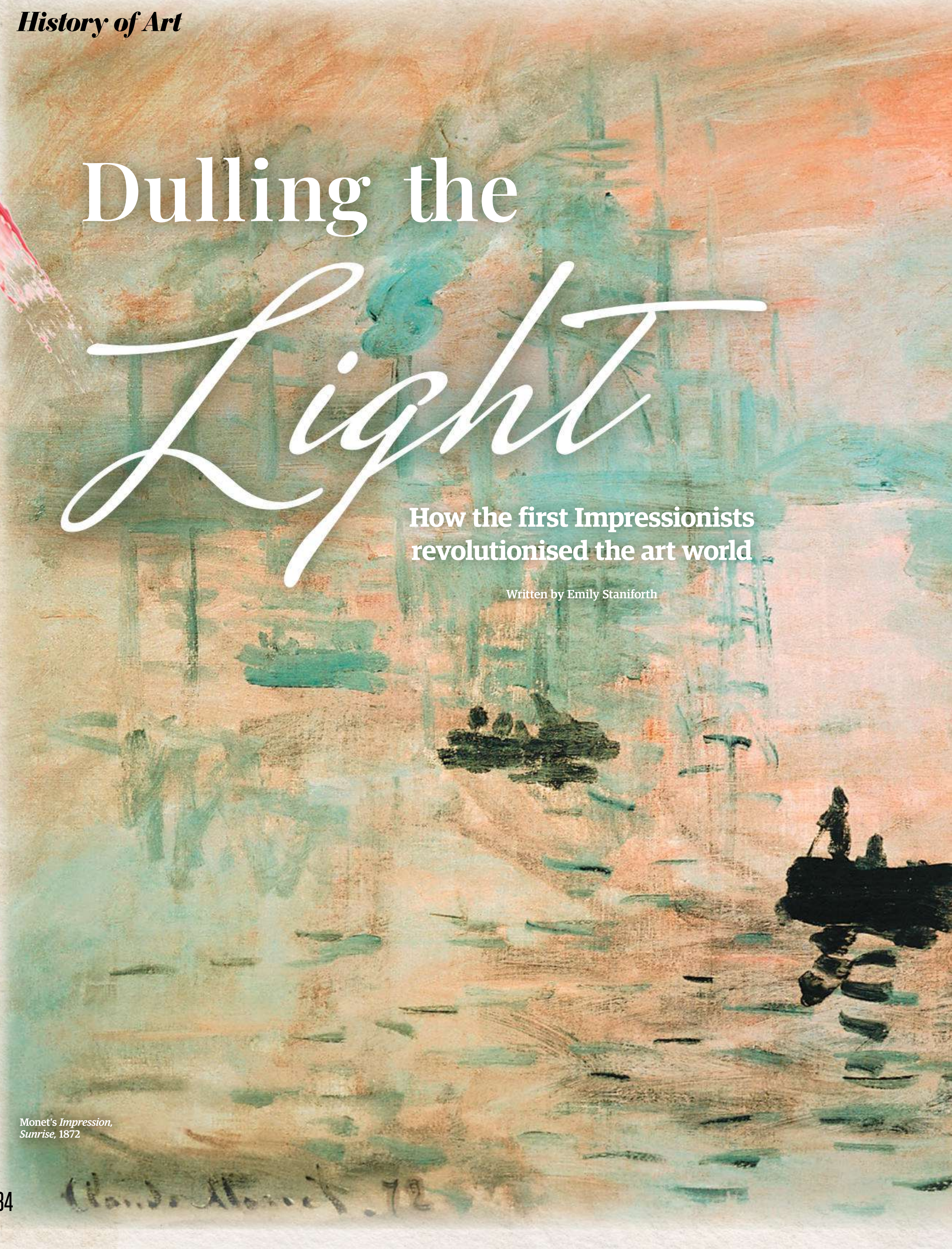


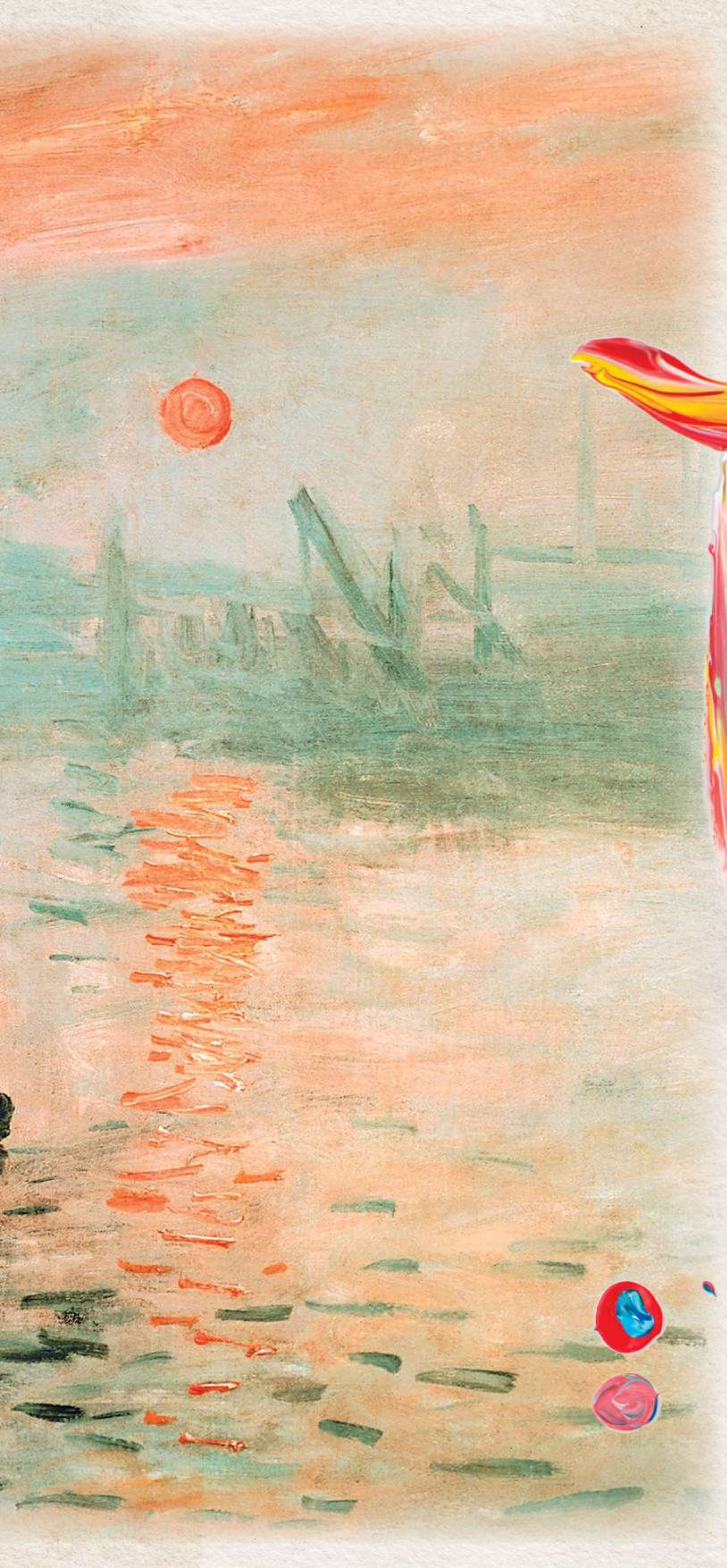
# Dulling the Light

## How the first Impressionists revolutionised the art world

Written by Emily Staniforth



Monet's *Impression, Sunrise,* 1872



The art movement that would later become known as Impressionism first originated in France among a group of young artists who wanted their work to reflect the things they saw around them. They wanted to paint scenes of the everyday life they saw around them, rather than produce portraits of the rich and wealthy, or document scenes of historical importance. In the late 19th century, the onset of the Industrial Revolution had afforded the lower classes of French society the opportunity to take time away from their strenuous jobs. This came at a time when access to the new railroads also meant that ordinary people could venture out into the countryside and away from the cities.

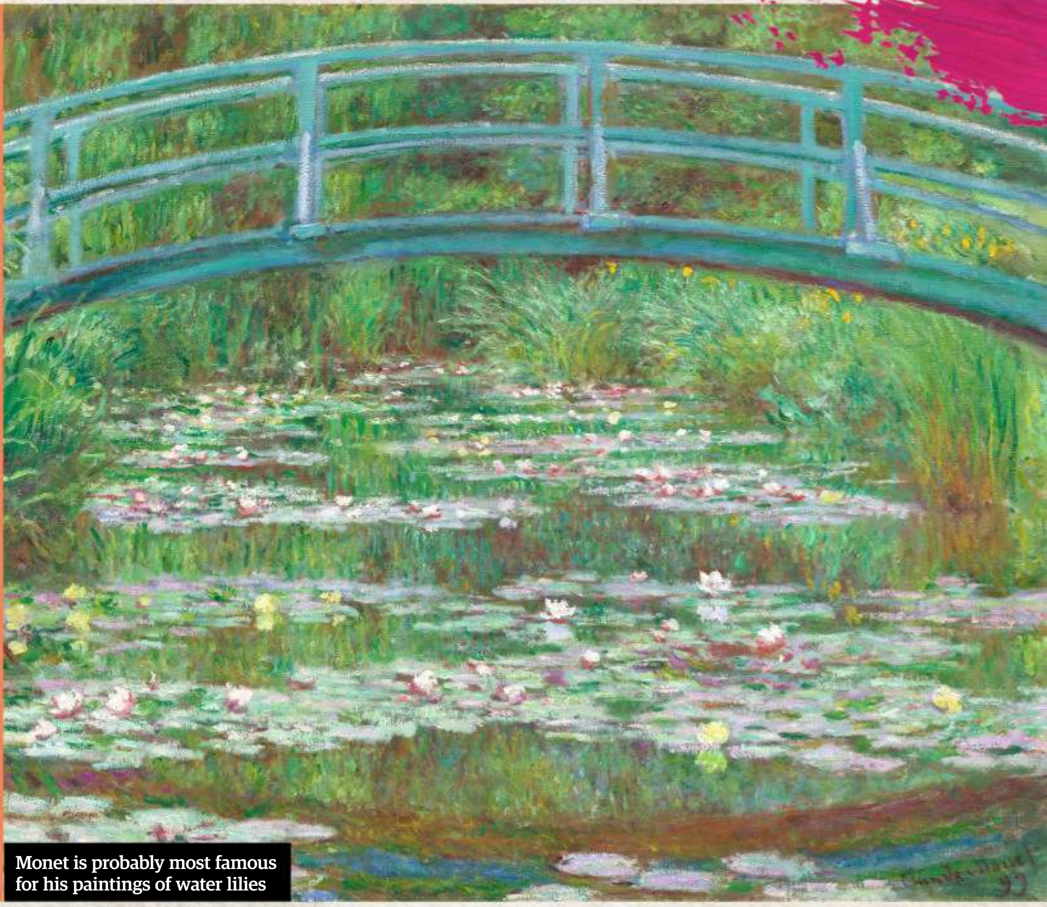
It was during this time, around 1860, that a group of art students began to take advantage of the new popular settings and activities. As Sotheby's explains, "In their free time, the students began boarding trains bound for remote areas around the city, where they'd set their easels amongst the fields or riverbanks and try their best to capture the fleeting glints of sunlight reflected by water, workers bent to their task or Parisians enjoying a lazy Sunday by the sea". Among these students were Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, both of whom would become central figures of the Impressionist movement.

One thing that separated the budding Impressionist artists like Monet and Renoir from the Old Masters is that they preferred to work outdoors and away from studios. This painting, 'en plein-air', enabled Impressionists to portray light, shade and the natural world in an incredibly innovative way. In order to depict their subjects and landscapes in a particular moment of time, these artists had to work quickly in order to perfectly capture the light. In doing so, they learned more about how to use light and colour. Accuracy of form thus mattered less to the Impressionists, as their quick work meant that shapes and lines were

## The genius of Claude Monet

In his review of the first exhibition, Leroy panned one of Monet's works entitled *Impression, Sunrise*. He said of the painting, "A preliminary drawing for a wallpaper pattern is more finished than this seascape". It is from the title of *Impression, Sunrise* that Leroy developed his review title and thus the painting serves as the inspiration for the name of the wider movement. Though Monet is now considered to be the leading artist of Impressionism, and one of the greatest painters of all time, this scathing review at the start of his career reflected how many people saw his work when it first began to be displayed.

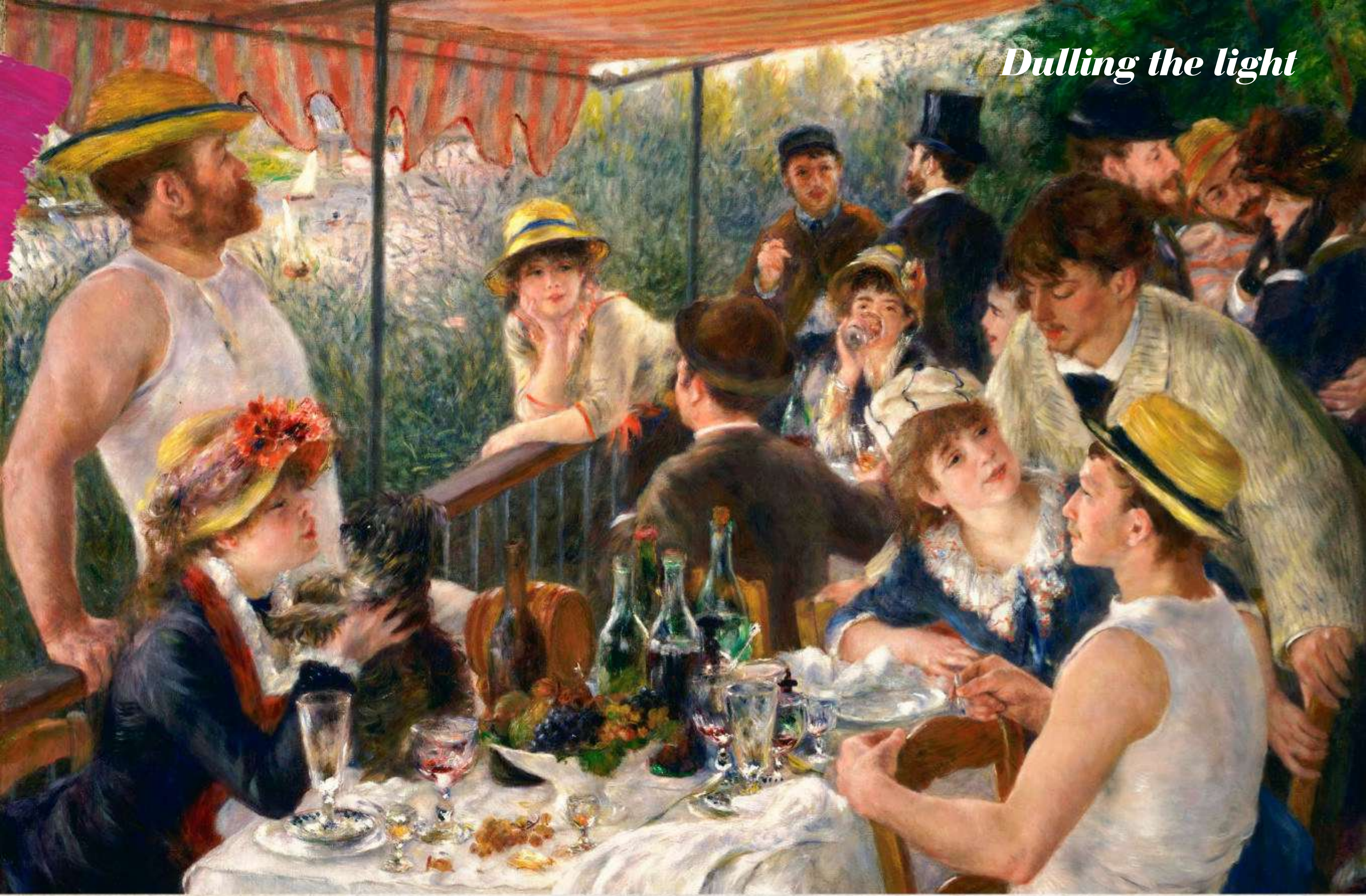
For much of his life as an artist, Monet's work was not seen as anything special – in fact he struggled to make a living from selling his paintings and working on commissions. But, in 1883, Monet and his family moved to a house in the town of Giverny, which had expansive gardens. At this house, Monet fell in love with his garden and expanded it, planting flowers and creating a Japanese garden. Inspired by his new surroundings, Monet's paintings began to be sold in France, England and America. From 1897 to 1899, Monet took to painting his first 'Water Lilies' series, which would become some of his most lauded work. Now considered to be masterpieces of Impressionism, the 'Water Lilies' series has secured Monet's place in art history as more than just a founder of the Impressionist movement. The beautiful water lilies at his garden in Giverny still draw visitors to the artist's house today.

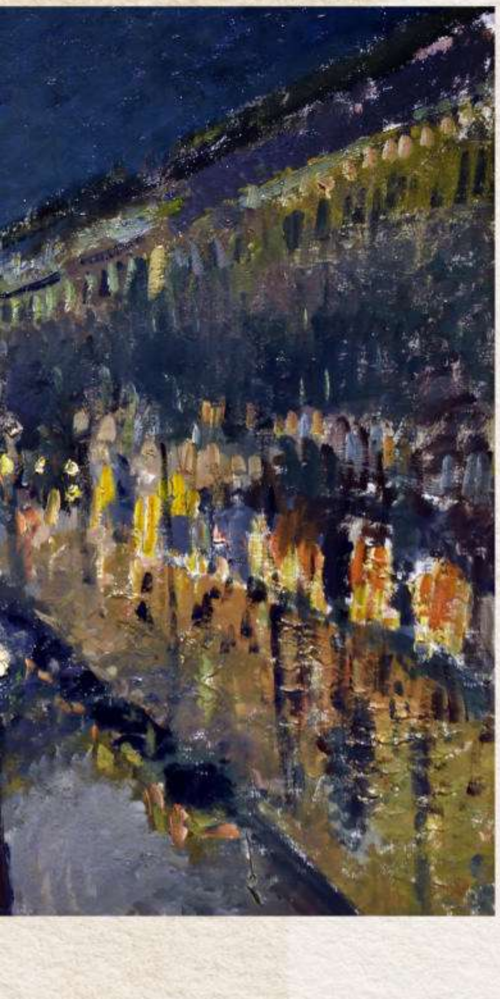

Monet is probably most famous for his paintings of water lilies

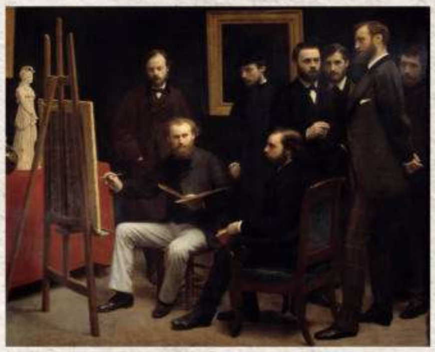
less defined and brush strokes were dabs made to represent their subject. However, this new way of painting, while impressive and highly regarded today, was not received well at its genesis.

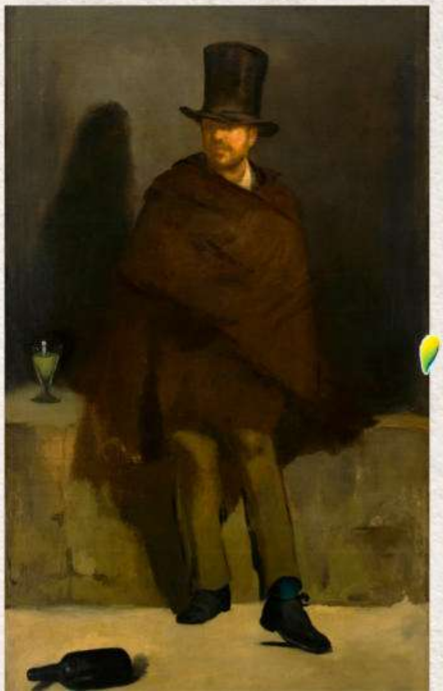
The group of painters we now class as part of the Impressionist movement all had their own distinct styles, but found camaraderie in each other and their attempts to capture scenes of everyday life and the nuances of light and colour. As mentioned, form mattered less to the Impressionists than it did to other, more traditional artists, and while this eventually came to define their genre of work, it proved controversial in their early careers. Édouard Manet, for example, was a leading proponent for this new type of art but struggled to get his work accepted by the Paris Salon, an exhibition held by the Académie des Beaux-Arts, which displayed the best pieces of art being painted at the time. In 1859, he presented his work, *The Absinthe Drinker*, to the Salon, but it was rejected due to its visible brush strokes and its unfinished look, despite it being painted in a more Realist style. Both Manet and Monet continued to submit their work to the Salon, but they continued to be turned down due to their respective styles, which differed hugely from one another but both of which would come to be characterised as Impressionist. Manet's work largely depicted people and scenes of life, whereas Monet focused mainly on painting landscapes and the natural world. Other artists of the Impressionist movement included Edgar Degas, famed for his paintings of ballerinas, and Camille Pissarro, who painted landscapes. Renoir preferred to capture the female form, while Paul Cézanne is most well known for his still life artwork. Though each member of the Impressionist movement had their individual preferences and techniques, they all bonded over their wish to paint in a different, more expressive way.

"This new way of painting… was not received well at its genesis"









**ABOVE** *Luncheon of the Boating Party*, 1880-81 by Pierre-Auguste Renoir

**FAR LEFT** *The Boulevard Montmartre at Night* by Camille Pissarro, 1897

**LEFT TOP** This painting of the Batignolles group by Henri Fantin-Latour, 1870, features Manet, Monet and Renoir

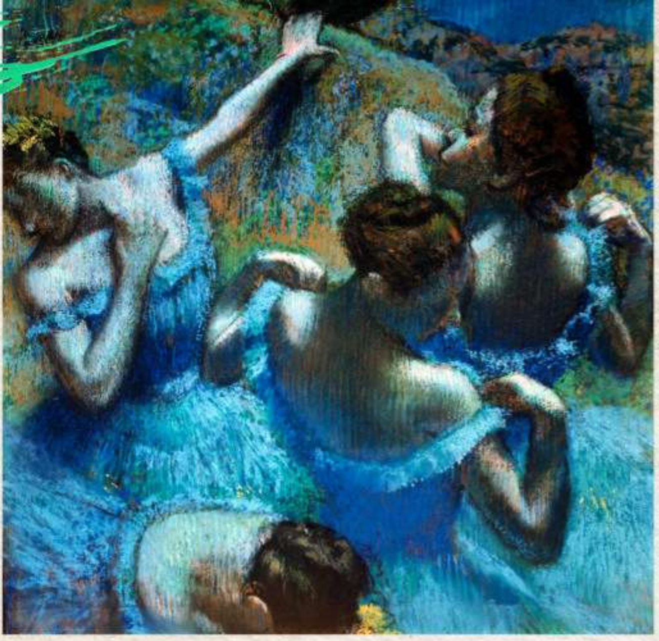
**LEFT** Manet's *The Absinthe Drinker*, painted around 1859, was one of his first works that was rejected by the Salon

## The first Impressionist exhibition

The Café Guerbois in the Montmartre district of Paris became a hub for the artists embracing new styles of painting, and it was there that those disappointed by the Salon met to discuss their shared dislike of traditional methods. They christened themselves the Batignolles group, and though predominantly artists, they were sometimes joined by writers and critics.

By 1873, the group came up with a way to display their work without the approval of the Salon. Having had enough of rejection and wanting to let the public see and judge their work for themselves, the Batignolles group set up the Société Anonyme Coopérative des Artistes Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs (Cooperative and Anonymous Association of Painters, Sculptors and Engravers). In December, the association's charter was signed by Monet, Degas, Pissarro and Renoir as well as others. For artists like Pissarro, who'd had his earlier, more traditional work displayed by the Salon, this must have been a huge step, as one of the conditions of the society was that artists could no longer exhibit with the Salon.

On 15 April 1874, the first exhibition of the group was held at the old workshop



of French photographer Nadar on the Boulevard des Capucines. Featuring 165 works of art, the exhibition was a momentous occasion for the Impressionists for a number of reasons. Firstly, the exhibition marked the first time they were able to display their own work without approval from the Salon. Secondly, the exhibition was significant in that it was the first time a group had promoted their work in a show outside of the Salon. And finally, and arguably most importantly, the displaying of these paintings introduced the world to a revolutionary art movement.

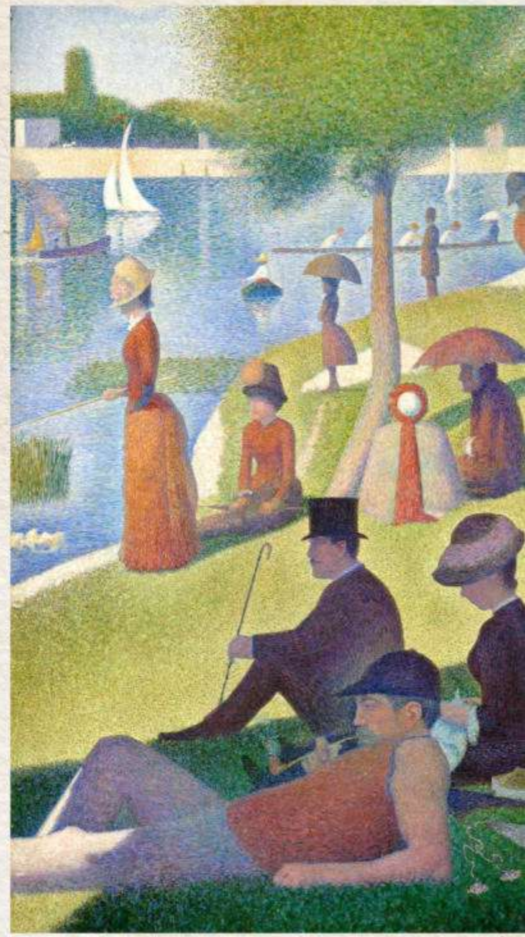
Having identified themselves through the group they had established, this collection of artists found themselves with a new name after their first exhibition. Critic Louis Leroy gave his satirical review of the event the title "L'Exposition des impressionnistes", in which he mocked both the artists' "impressions" of scenes and people, as well as the traditional artists who were so shocked by the paintings on display. From this point on, the term Impressionism was used to describe the movement and its associated painters.

## A lasting impression

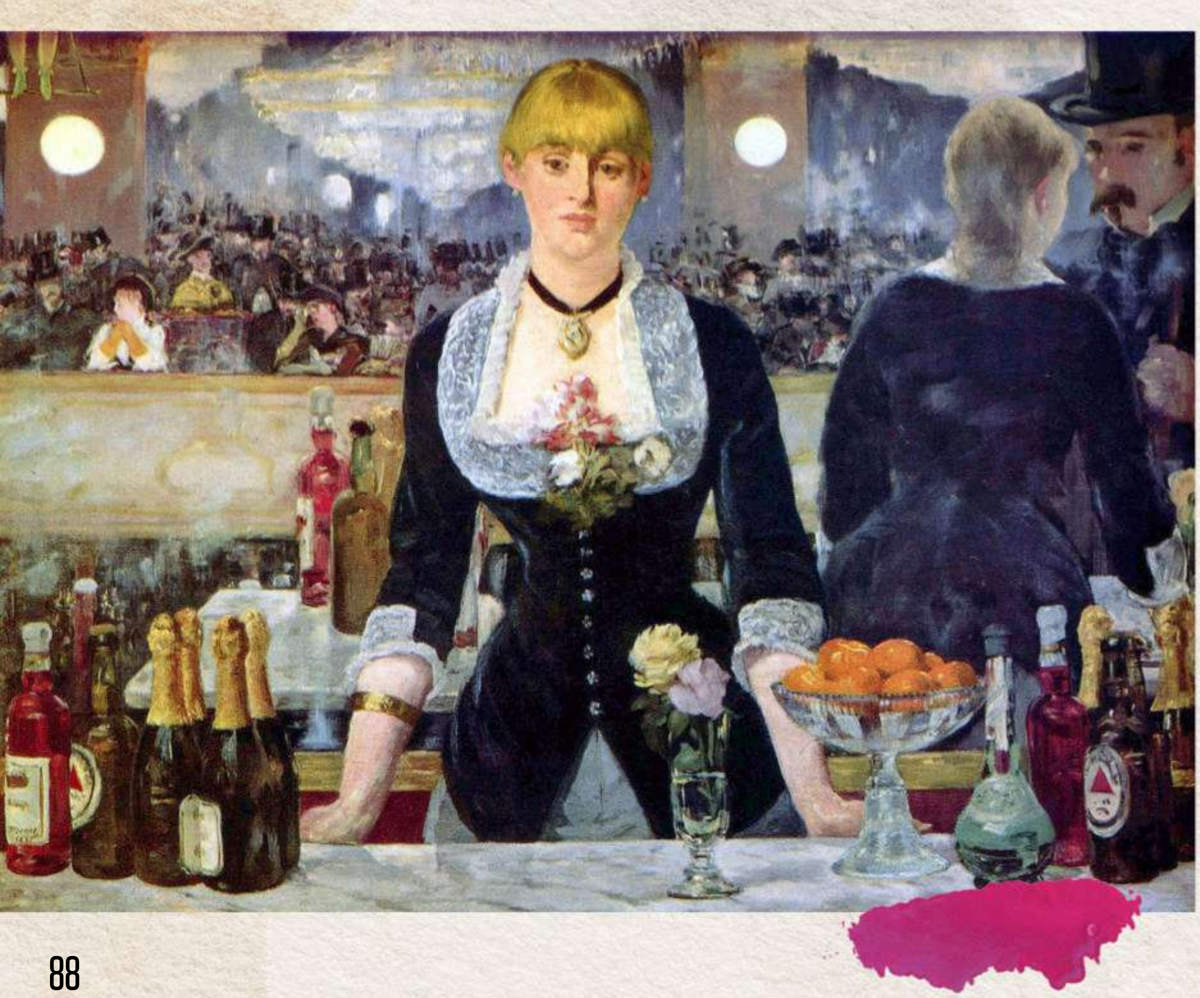
After the first exhibition, Impressionism as a movement began to gather momentum and exhibitions of the same kind continued to be put on over the next 12 years, with the eighth and last being held in 1886. Only one of the original artists, Pissarro, continued to display their work in all eight of the Impressionist exhibitions, though many new artists were inspired by the Impressionists and began to align themselves with the movement and display their work at the exhibitions. By this point in time, many of these newer artists were branching off into new, exciting and creative directions and were adapting the modern approach to art taken by the Impressionists to develop new styles. Georges Seurat, for example, displayed his work *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, a painting that is now described as a work of pointillism, at the last Impressionist exhibition. This pointillist technique, which consisted of painting individual dots of colour that formed a wider picture, had grown out of Impressionist influence concerning the lack of form needed in art. On viewing Seurat's painting, alongside other newer works at the exhibition, a critic used the term Neo-Impressionism for the first time to characterise this offshoot of Impressionism. *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* is now considered to be one of the earliest, most important and characteristic Neo-Impressionist works.

With the original painters of the Impressionist movement taking the first steps to turn away from traditional, structured art that had dominated the French art scene, an appetite to think outside of the box was fostered – and not just in France. The Impressionist movement touched artists overseas, inspiring countless contemporary and future artists. From its humble beginnings, the Impressionist movement revolutionised the way artists could express themselves, and enabled other artists to create art that spoke to them.

**ABOVE** *The Blue Dancers*, a 1897 pastel scene by Edgar Degas

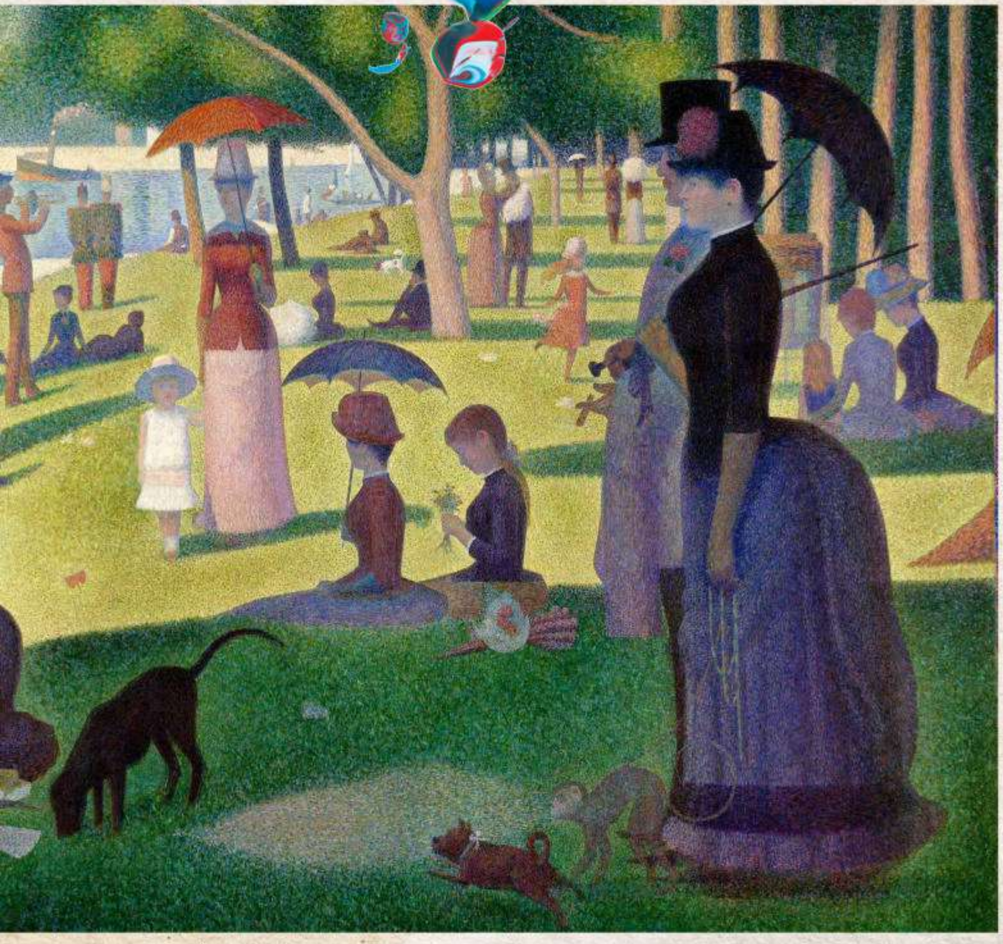


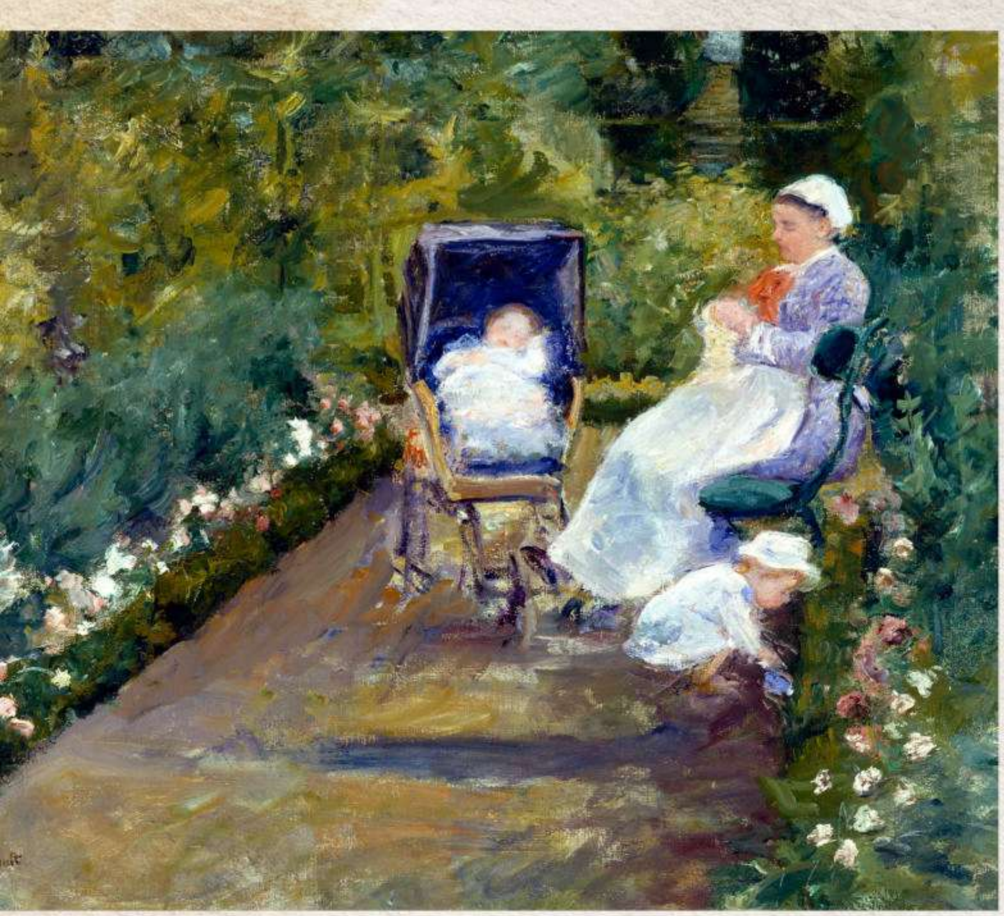
**RIGHT** *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, 1884-86 by Georges Seurat



**BELOW** Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, 1882, was exhibited at the Salon and was his last major work

**BELOW RIGHT** *Children in a Garden (The Nurse)* by Mary Cassatt, 1878



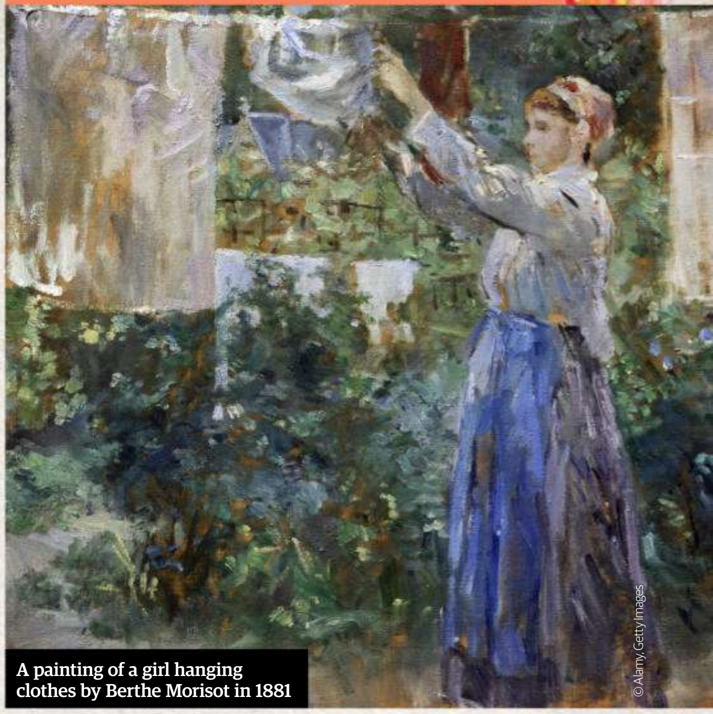


# Female Impressionists

Judging from the artists who made up the core group of original Impressionists, it's easy to wrongly assume that the movement was only populated by men. In fact, there were a number of female Impressionists, who came along to diversify the movement and create some of the most impressive and significant works of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Berthe Morisot was a successful artist before her involvement in the Impressionist movement, with her work being exhibited in the Salon in 1864. She continued to have her work accepted for six more of the Salon's exhibitions, but she later joined the Batignolles group, becoming one of the founders of their Association and exhibiting her work in their first exhibition in 1874. She became known for painting scenes of domestic life, heavily focusing on female subjects. Her intense brush strokes characterised her work, and like many Impressionists she played with the idea of form. Morisot continued to paint until her death at the age of 54, and is only now beginning to be as recognised as her male contemporaries.

One Impressionist painter who came along slightly after the movement's birth was Mary Cassatt. An American painter who had moved to study in Paris in the 1860s, Cassatt's more traditional early work had found favour with the Salon. However, in 1877 her success had dwindled, so her friend Edgar Degas suggested she exhibit with the Impressionists. From that point onwards, the aesthetic of Cassatt's work altered and began to reflect the pillars of Impressionism: use of light and shade, softer pastel colours and more expressive brush strokes. Cassatt, alongside Morisot, is considered to be one of the best female Impressionist painters in history.



**A painting of a girl hanging clothes by Berthe Morisot in 1881**

© Alamy, Getty Images

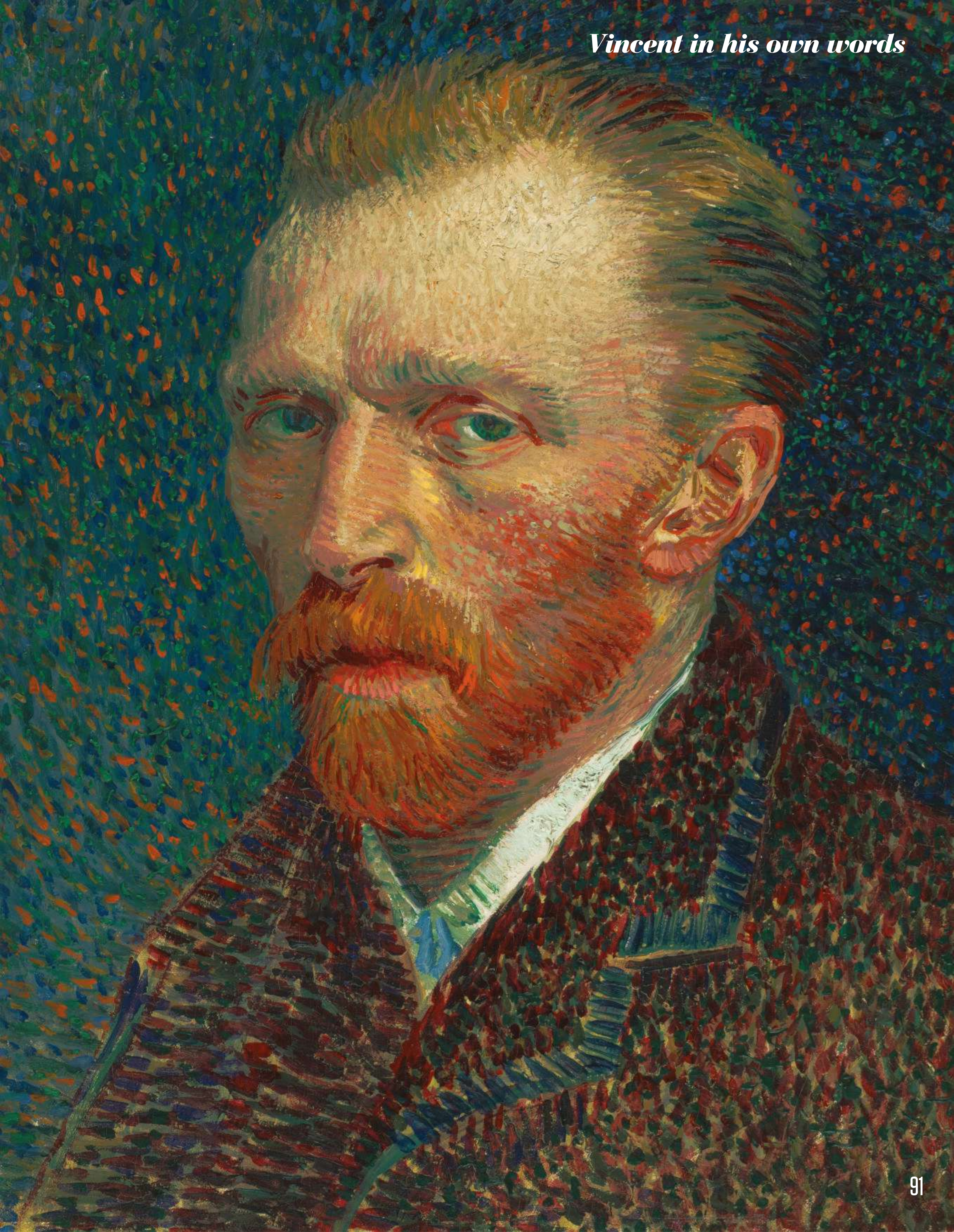
# Vincent IN HIS OWN WORDS

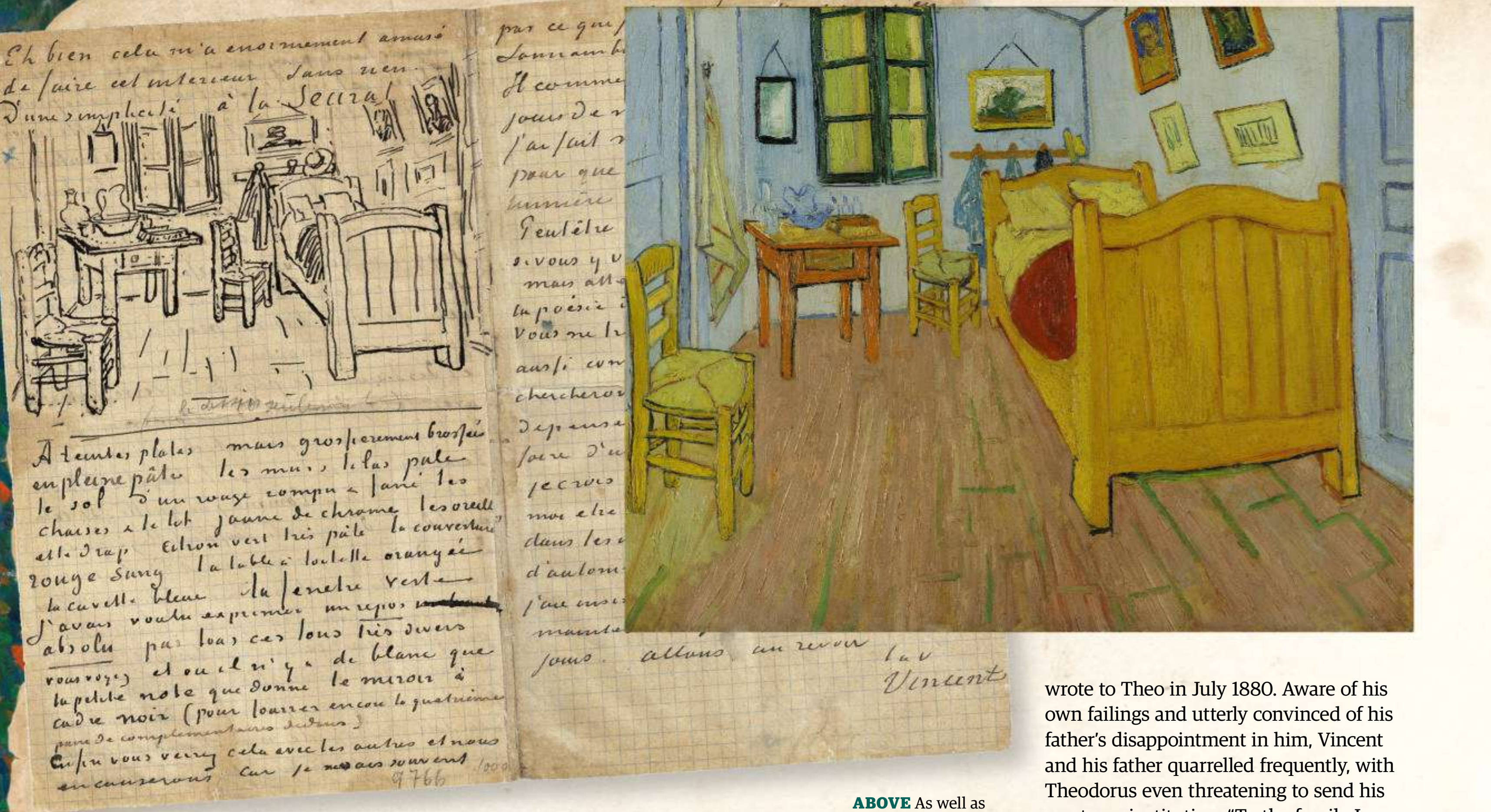
### Vincent van Gogh may be celebrated for his masterpieces, but his greatest legacy – and the key to understanding the man himself – are his letters

Written by Philippa Grafton

**Three months after leaving Paris for the south of France, Vincent van Gogh – his mind awhirl with thoughts of art, the future, his new home in Arles – sat down to write to his brother.** "My dear Theo," he wrote on 4 May 1888, "I'm dropping you another line to tell you that on reflection it would be better for me just to take a rug & a mattress and make a bed on the floor in the studio." So began one of Vincent's most profound letters. Simple questions of domesticity and Vincent's humble life soon gave way to the inevitable lines on art, and what began as a mundane letter quickly turned prophetic: "The painter of the future will be a colourist the like of which has never yet been seen… I can't imagine the painter of the future living in a small restaurant, setting to work with a lot of false teeth, and going to the Zouaves' brothel as I do. But I'm sure I'm right to think that it will come in a later generation, and it is up to us to do what we can to encourage it, without question or complaint." It would take just over two years for Vincent's prophecy of the "painter of the future" to come true, and despite his assertions, it was Vincent who would be the artist to fulfil it. By that time, Vincent would also be dead.

In his youth, Vincent had never intended to become an artist. Born on 30 March 1853, Vincent was the first surviving child of Reverend Theodorus van Gogh and his wife, Anna Carbentus. Four years after Vincent's birth, Theo was born. Among a brood of six, Theo and Vincent were especially close, and when his childhood came to an end and he began his first job, Vincent took up his pen to write to his brother, his first missive to Theo written in 1872 while Vincent worked in The Hague. Three years before, Vincent had taken up a position at Goupil & Cie, an international art dealer that opened up the world to the young man. He was dismissed in 1876, but in the years before Vincent had lived and worked in Brussels, London





Eh bien cela m'a énormément amusé
de faire cet intérieur sans rien.
D'une simplicité à la Seurat

A teintes plates mais grossièrement brossées
en pleine pâte les murs, lilas pâle
le sol d'un rouge rompu & fané les
chaises & le lit jaune de chrome les oreillers
et le drap citron vert très pâle la couverture
rouge sang la table à toilette orangée
la cuvette bleue la fenêtre verte
J'avais voulu exprimer un repos ~~absolu~~
absolu par tous ces tons très divers
vous voyez et où il n'y a de blanc que
la petite note que donne le miroir à
cadre noir (pour fourrer encore la quatrième
paire de complémentaires dedans)
Enfin vous verrez cela avec les autres et nous
en causerons car je ne sais souvent

par ce qu
Sommamb
Il comme
jour de
j'ai fait
pour que
lumière
Peut-être
si vous y v
mais alle
la poésie
Vous me
aussi con
chercheron
dépense
faire d'u
je crois
moi chez
dans les
d'autom
j'ai ensu
mainten
jours. allons au revoir
t.à.v.
Vincent

**ABOVE** As well as writing to his brother, Vincent wrote to fellow artist Paul Gauguin to encourage him to visit. In his letter dated 17 October 1888, he sketched his bedroom in Arles

**BELOW** A photograph of Theo, Vincent's closest confidant

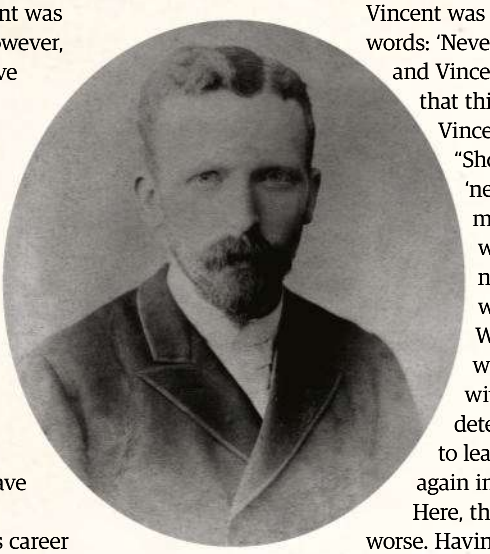
## "By 1879 Vincent had abandoned his aspirations to join the clergy"

and Paris, where he indulged his passion for art by collecting prints and visiting galleries.

With his career in the art world seemingly at an end, Vincent devoted himself to his latest emerging passion: God. He was determined to follow in his father's footsteps, begging Theo in a letter dated 22 March 1877 to "cast your eye up on high and ask that it be granted to me". Over the course of three years, Vincent's determination turned to obsession, and his letters were soon filled with religious fervour, or lamenting at the long path ahead of him: "If only everything were already behind me, as it is behind Father, but it takes so much hard work to become a Christian labourer and a preacher of the Gospel." After moving to England once more, Vincent's quest to join the family trade led him to The Borinage in Belgium, where he became a preacher to coal miners. Living in squalid conditions in a bleak town, Vincent attempted to devote himself to his new congregation, but his methods attracted the ire of his superiors and he was quickly stripped of his position.

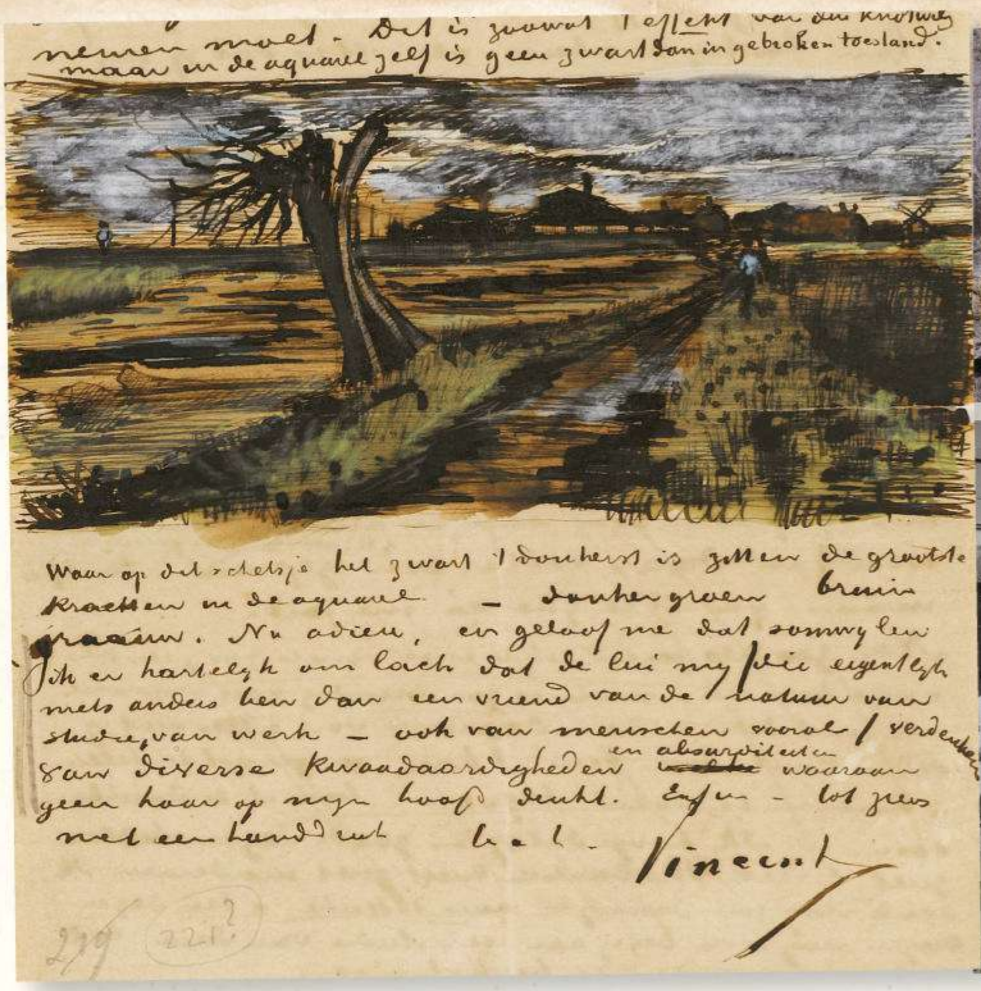
After just over two years, Vincent's devotion to God began to cool, and by 1879 he had abandoned his aspirations to join the clergy. Instead, Vincent was resolved to become an artist. However, with no income and an expensive new profession, Vincent needed money. It was at this point that Theo became Vincent's 'patron', a role that he would continue until his brother's dying day. It was a blessing, but the debt hung over Vincent's head like a storm cloud, as he explained in August 1879: "If I ever came to believe seriously that I was being a nuisance or a burden to you or to those at home… then I should be overwhelmed by a feeling of sadness and should have to wrestle with despair."

In the time between Vincent's career in the clergy stalling and taking up art full-time, Vincent's relationship with his family began to crumble too. "For the past five years or so … I have been more or less without permanent employment, wandering from pillar to post," Vincent wrote to Theo in July 1880. Aware of his own failings and utterly convinced of his father's disappointment in him, Vincent and his father quarrelled frequently, with Theodorus even threatening to send his son to an institution. "To the family I have, willy-nilly, become a more or less objectionable and shady sort of character, at any rate a bad lot," lamented Vincent.



Things weren't to improve in the coming months. Despite their clashes, Vincent moved back in with his parents in April 1881. Having fallen madly in love with his cousin, Kee Vos-Stricker, Vincent was rebuffed in three cutting words: 'Never, no, never". While Kee's and Vincent's parents were satisfied that this was the end of the matter, Vincent continued to pursue her. "Should I resign myself to that 'never, no, never', or consider the matter not yet settled & done with, keep in good heart and not give up. I chose the latter," wrote Vincent on 3 November. With Vincent determined to win over Kee, his relationship with his parents continued to deteriorate until he was forced to leave, taking up residence once again in The Hague in January 1882.

Here, things went from bad to worse. Having started studying under celebrated watercolourist Anton Mauve the year before, Vincent's mentor encouraged Vincent to devote himself to figure studies. Mauve, however, had not anticipated Vincent taking up with one of his models, a pregnant prostitute called



nemen moet. – Dit is zoowat 't effekt van den knotwilg
maar in de aquarel zelf is geen zwart dan in gebroken toestand.

Waar op dit schetsje het zwart 't donkerst is zitten de grootste
krachten in de aquarel – donkergroen bruin
grauw. Nu adieu, en geloof me dat somwylen
ik er hartelyk om lach dat de lui my /die eigentlyk
niets anders ben dan een vriend van de natuur van
studie, van werk – ook van menschen vooral / verdenken
van diverse kwaadaardigheden ~~[illegible]~~ en absurditeiten waaraan
geen haar op myn hoofd denkt. Enfin – tot ziens
met een handdruk t. a. t.

Vincent

219 221?

ICI REPOSE
VINCENT VAN GOGH
1853-1890
ICI REPOSE
THÉODORE VAN GOGH

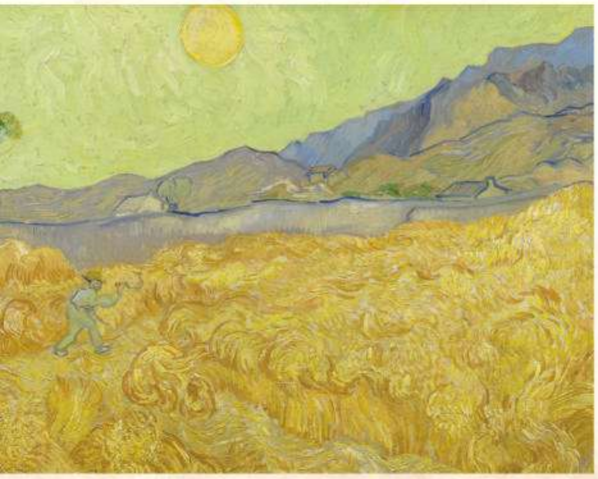
Sien Hoornik. "I met Mauve today and had a most regrettable conversation with him," Vincent explained to Theo in May 1882, eventually revealing that "in the end he said, 'You have a vicious character'." Mauve wasn't the only person to condemn Vincent's relationship with Sien, and Theo himself expressed dismay at his brother's situation – particularly when it came out that Vincent planned to marry her. "I will not deceive or forsake a woman," retorted Vincent to Theo later that month. Indeed, Vincent was willing to forego his brother's monthly stipend to stay with Sien: "Were I to be told for certain that you are withdrawing your support, I should be rendered powerless… If this dreadful fate has to befall me – so be it. I can say nothing other than: I have pledged [Sien] my troth and she has pledged me hers."

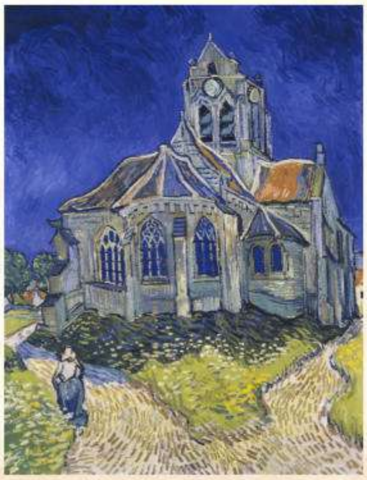
It was a blessing that Theo continued to finance his brother's career; after being released from hospital for gonorrhoea treatment in July 1882, Vincent began to dabble with oil paints. This was a decidedly different medium to the sketches and watercolours that Vincent was used to, and while he felt that he was achieving a more pleasing, saleable result, his expenditure began to soar: "Though I myself enjoy doing it immensely, the heavy expenses will probably prevent me for the time being from doing as much painting as my ambition and inclination demand" (August 1882).

As the year rolled over, Vincent found his domestic life with Sien limiting his artistic output. He longed to leave The Hague, and by autumn he travelled to Drenthe, but he was plagued by guilt for abandoning her, as he described to his brother in early October: "I know that she is no good, that I have every right to do as I am doing, that I could not stay with her there, that I really could not take her with me… but that doesn't alter the fact that it cuts right through me."

After several months in Drenthe, Vincent returned to live with his parents, taking up his own studio. Despite the death of his father in 1885, Vincent continued to work diligently, and by spring he was on the brink of completing his first 'masterpiece', *The Potato Eaters*. In a letter dated 30 April 1885, his excitement was palpable: "It might just turn out to be a genuine peasant painting. I know that it is. But anyone who prefers to have his peasants looking namby-pamby had best suit himself."

In March 1886, Vincent travelled to Paris to live with Theo, where he not





**TOP LEFT** A letter from Vincent to Theo, including a sketched version of a watercolour painting Vincent had made of a pollard willow tree in 1882

**TOP RIGHT** After his death in 1891, Theo was laid to rest next to his elder brother in Auvers-sur-Oise

**ABOVE RIGHT** In July 1962, three letters written by Vincent to his landlord in 1883 were sold for £1,200 to an unidentified buyer

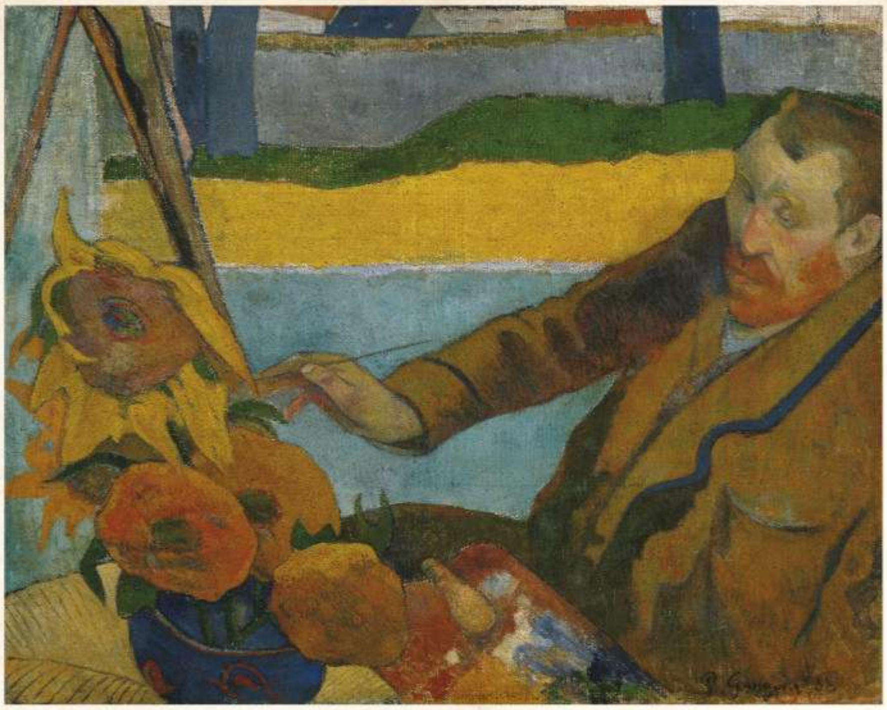
**FAR LEFT** Of *Wheatfield With A Reaper*, Vincent wrote, "there is no sadness in this death, this one takes place in broad daylight with a sun flooding everything with a light of pure gold"

**LEFT** Vincent painted the church in Auvers-sur-Oise, which still stands down the road from his and Theo's resting place only became acquainted with new artistic trends, but where he became close to several artists, including Émile Bernard, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Paul Gauguin. Few letters exist from the period, but Vincent continued to struggle financially, painting dozens of self-portraits to make up for the shortage of affordable models. Despite the hardships of Parisian life, Vincent and Theo's relationship was rejuvenated, as Vincent admitted in a letter to his sister, Wilhelmina, in the summer of 1887: "If I didn't have Theo, I should not be able to do justice to my work, but having him for a friend, I'm sure I shall make progress and things will fall into place." He went on to admit, "As soon as possible, I plan to spend some time in the south, where there is even more colour and even more sun."

"When I left Paris I was in a sorry state, quite ill and almost an alcoholic," Vincent revealed in a letter to Gauguin on 3 October 1888. Indeed, in February Vincent had moved south, where he spent his first weeks recuperating during unseasonably bad weather. Once the weather cleared, however, Vincent fell in love with the climate and countryside. "I have never had such luck before, nature here is extraordinarily beautiful. Everything and everywhere," he wrote in September. It was here that Vincent acquired the Yellow House, where he envisioned an artists' commune with himself and "a first-rate painter" – Gauguin – as permanent residents.

Vincent began to paint in earnest, determined to plaster the walls of the Yellow House with paintings of people and sunflowers. To Vincent's elation, Gauguin arrived in Arles in October. At first the pair seemed to work well together, but cracks quickly began to appear. By December the situation was tense, with the artists frequently bickering. By this point, Vincent's mood was low, and on 23 December 1888, Vincent penned a quick note to his brother, stating, "I think that Gauguin was a little disenchanted with the good town of Arles, the little yellow house where we work, and above all with me." That fateful evening, Vincent allegedly attempted to attack Gauguin with a razor. Gauguin stormed away and, in a fit of rage, Vincent cut off his own ear, wrapped it in newspaper and gave it to a prostitute at his local brothel. The next day, he remembered little of what had happened.

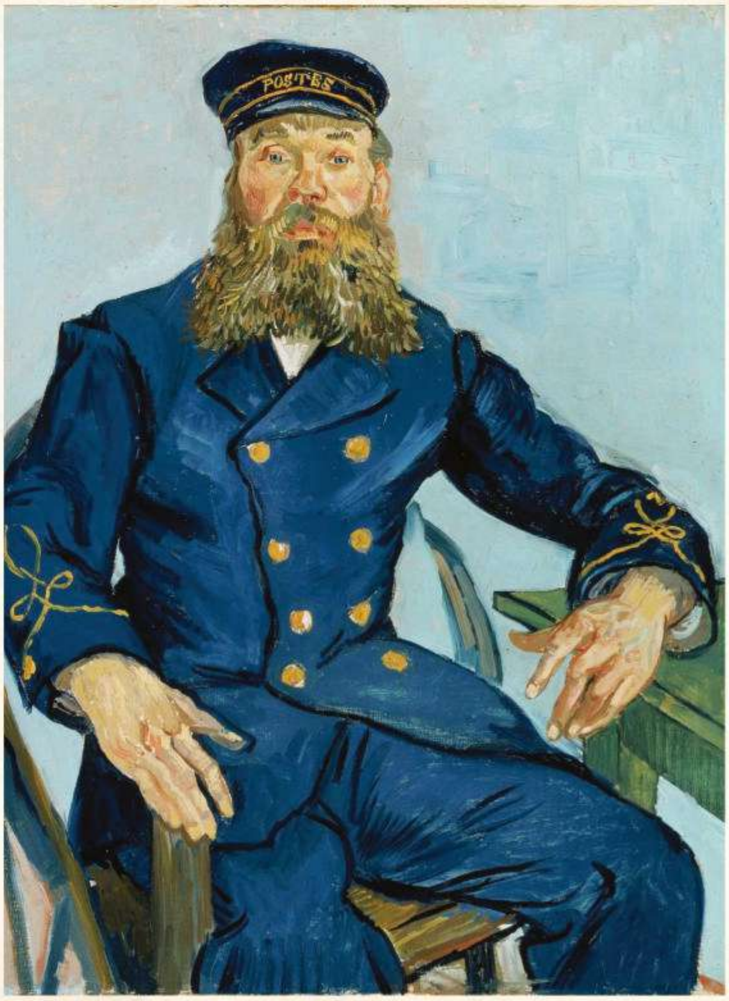
In the wake of Vincent's mental breakdown, he was placed in a hospital, where he remained until early January. He attempted to return to the Yellow House but, frightened by the events of 23

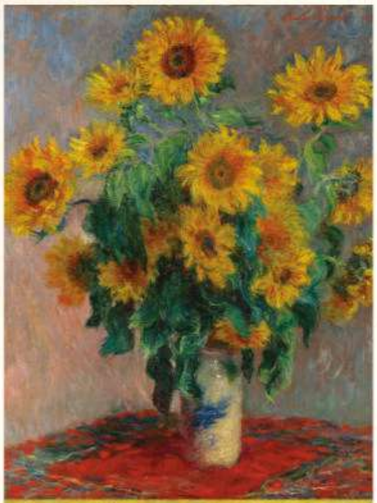


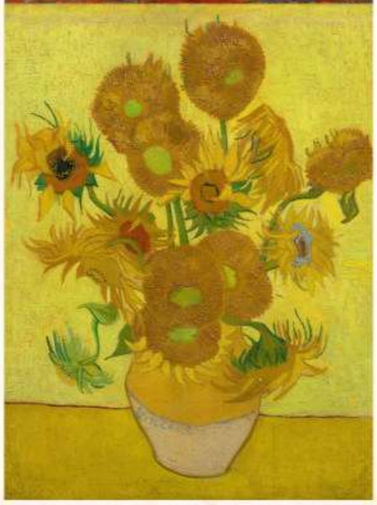
**RIGHT** Paul Gauguin's portrait of Vincent, entitled *The Painter Of Sunflowers*, was seen to Vincent as an insult, portraying him as a madman

**BELOW** Upon moving to Arles, Van Gogh painted Joseph Roulin, the postman, describing him in a letter to his sister as having "a head a bit like Socrates, almost no nose, a high forehead, bald crown small grey eyes, highly coloured plump cheeks, a big pepper-and-salt beard, large ears"

"Vincent painted many self-portraits to make up for the shortage of affordable models"







# A Fatal Inheritance

## Vincent wasn't the only sibling to suffer from mental health problems

Vincent might've catapulted to infamy after the fallout from his row with Gauguin, but what exactly afflicted this so-called 'tortured genius'? Several historians have projected their own diagnoses on the artist, but it's impossible to know exactly what Vincent suffered. In 1888 his doctor in Arles claimed that he suffered from epilepsy and "acute mania with generalised delirium". Epilepsy was little understood at the time, and could've been referencing any number of symptoms. More recent – and likely – theories include manic depression, as well as potential symptoms of syphilis. However, Vincent wasn't the only Van Gogh to be plagued by mental health issues. According to one of Vincent's letters, there were "many cases in the family". In May 1888, months before the fateful argument between artists, Vincent wrote to Theo, claiming, "[Our ailment] is a fatal inheritance, since in civilisation the weakness increases from generation to generation."

### Theodorus van Gogh

**1822-1885**

Born on 8 February 1822, Vincent's father was a pastor for the Dutch Reformed Church. Theodorus and Vincent had a tense relationship, with Vincent believing that he was a disappointment to his father. Theodorus suffered a stroke and died in 1885.

### Anna Carbentus

**1819-1907**

Anna was born on 10 September 1819. At the age of 30 and with few marriage prospects, she was set up with her young sister's brother-in-law, Theodorus. The match was well-suited and the pair married in 1851. She instilled a passion for art in Vincent.

### Vincent

**1852-1852**

The first son of Theodorus and Anna was a stillborn son named Vincent after Theodorus's father and brother. As well as sharing a name, the two Vincents shared the exact same birth date, one year apart.

### Anna

**1855-1930**

The eldest daughter of Theodorus and Anna was as skilled a linguist as her brother, living for a time in England where she taught French. Vincent and Anna were not close, and after their father's death, the pair were estranged.

### Elisabeth

**1859-1936**

Elisabeth, nicknamed Lies, was – like her siblings – creative, and became a published poet in 1908. Two years later, she rose to prominence with her book *Vincent Van Gogh: Personal Reminiscences of an Artist.*

### Cornelius

**1867-1900**

The youngest Van Gogh took up a position in engineering. He died in 1900, though reports differ on how – some claim he was killed in action in the Anglo-Boer war, while others state that he committed suicide.

### Vincent

**1853-1890**

In his childhood Vincent was misunderstood among his family and was prone to "melancholy," as he referred to it in his letters. He was hospitalised for gonorrhea in 1882 and might have suffered from syphilis, too.

### Theodorus

**1857-1891**

Four years younger than his brother, Theo became Vincent's closest friend and confidant. Theo suffered from the same "melancholy" that afflicted his brother – and according to his doctor, Theo suffered it worse than Vincent.

### Wilhelmina

**1862-1941**

After his brother Theo, Vincent was closest to his youngest sister, Wil. After her brothers' deaths, her mental health began to decline and in 1902 she was placed in a psychiatric hospital, where she died almost 40 years later.

**LEFT** "Gauguin was telling me the other day that he had seen a picture by Claude Monet of sunflowers in a large Japanese vase, very fine, but – he likes mine better," wrote Vincent to Theo in December 1888

December, the locals had petitioned to keep him away, and Vincent's home was sealed and guarded by police. Despite this, Vincent continued to paint, explaining to Theo in February 1889 that "The work takes my mind off things, or rather keeps me in order."

In May 1889, fearing another major relapse, Vincent voluntarily entered the asylum in Saint-Rémy, where he continued to paint in an unused room. "I am struggling with all my might to keep my work under control by telling myself that success would be the best lightning conductor for my illness," Vincent wrote to Theo at the start of September 1889. Indeed, it was here in Saint-Rémy where Vincent painted some of his most poignant works, including *The Starry Night* and *Irises.*

By early 1890, Vincent's status as an artist was finally taking off, and an article about Vincent's art by Albert Aurier in *Le Mercure de France* propelled Vincent into the public eye. From Saint-Rémy, Vincent wrote to Aurier in February, claiming "I encounter my canvases anew in your article, but better than they are in reality, richer, more meaningful." The following month, ten of Vincent's paintings starred in the Salon des Indépendans in Paris.

Almost a year after entering the asylum, Vincent left. On 16 May he travelled to Paris and then on to Auvers-sur-Oise, where he'd been recommended to seek out Doctor Gachet. "I have found a perfect friend in Dr Gachet, something like another brother – so alike are we physically, and mentally, too. He is very nervous and most odd himself," Vincent explained to Wilhelmina in June.

But with the fear of more breakdowns hanging over his head, and the worry of being a financial burden on his brother and his growing family, Vincent's mood remained bleak. In his last letter to Theo, dated 24 July 1890, Vincent wrote "I should try, perhaps, to write to you about a great many things, but in the first place I have completely lost the inclination, and then, it seems useless to me." Three days later Vincent shot himself. Though he survived the initial shot and managed to stumble back to his room at the Ravoux Inn, he eventually succumbed to his injury, dying in the arms of Theo, his closest companion to the very end.

On 30 July 1890, Vincent van Gogh was buried in the cemetery in Auvers-sur-Oise in a ceremony attended by friends and family. In an account of it, Émile Bernard wrote, "Theodorus van Gogh is broken by grief". Theo never truly recovered after Vincent's death and, plagued by his own health problems, he died less than six months later.

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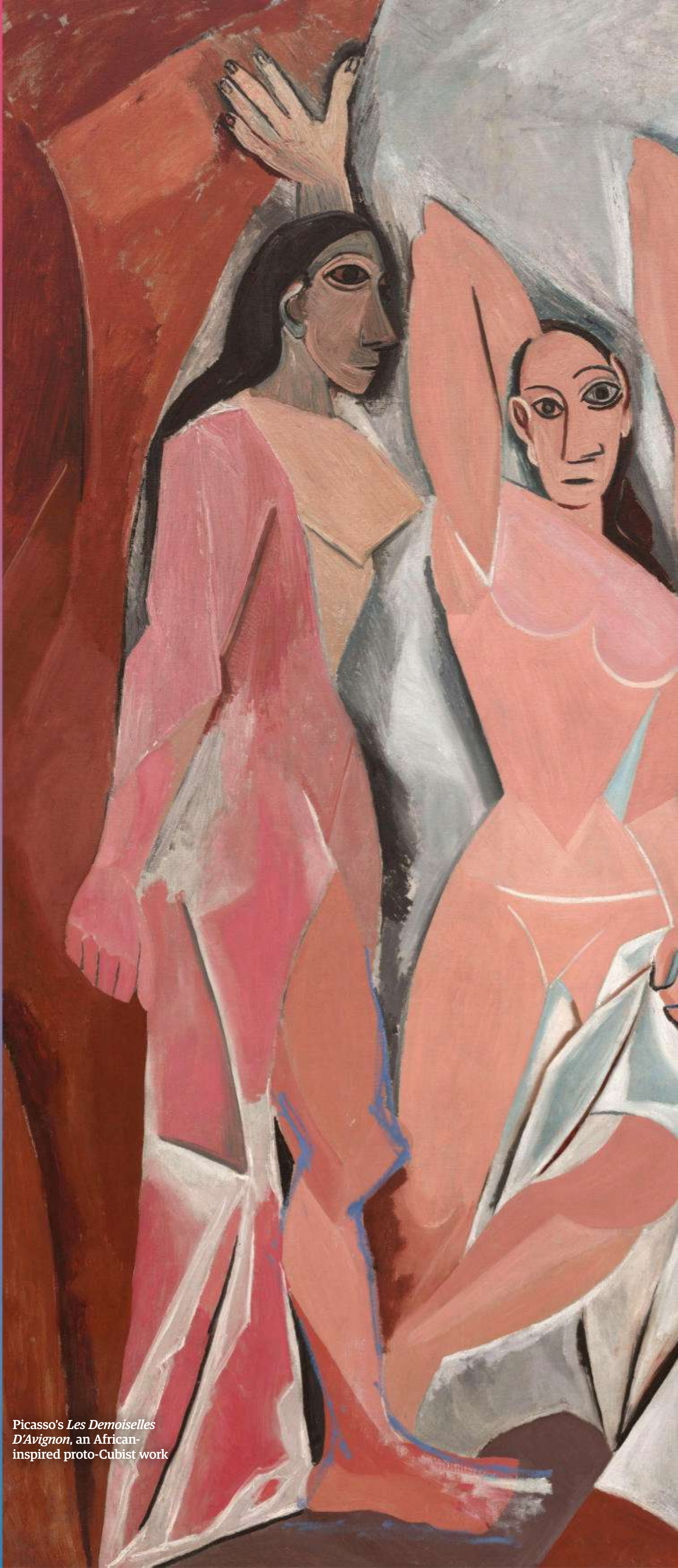
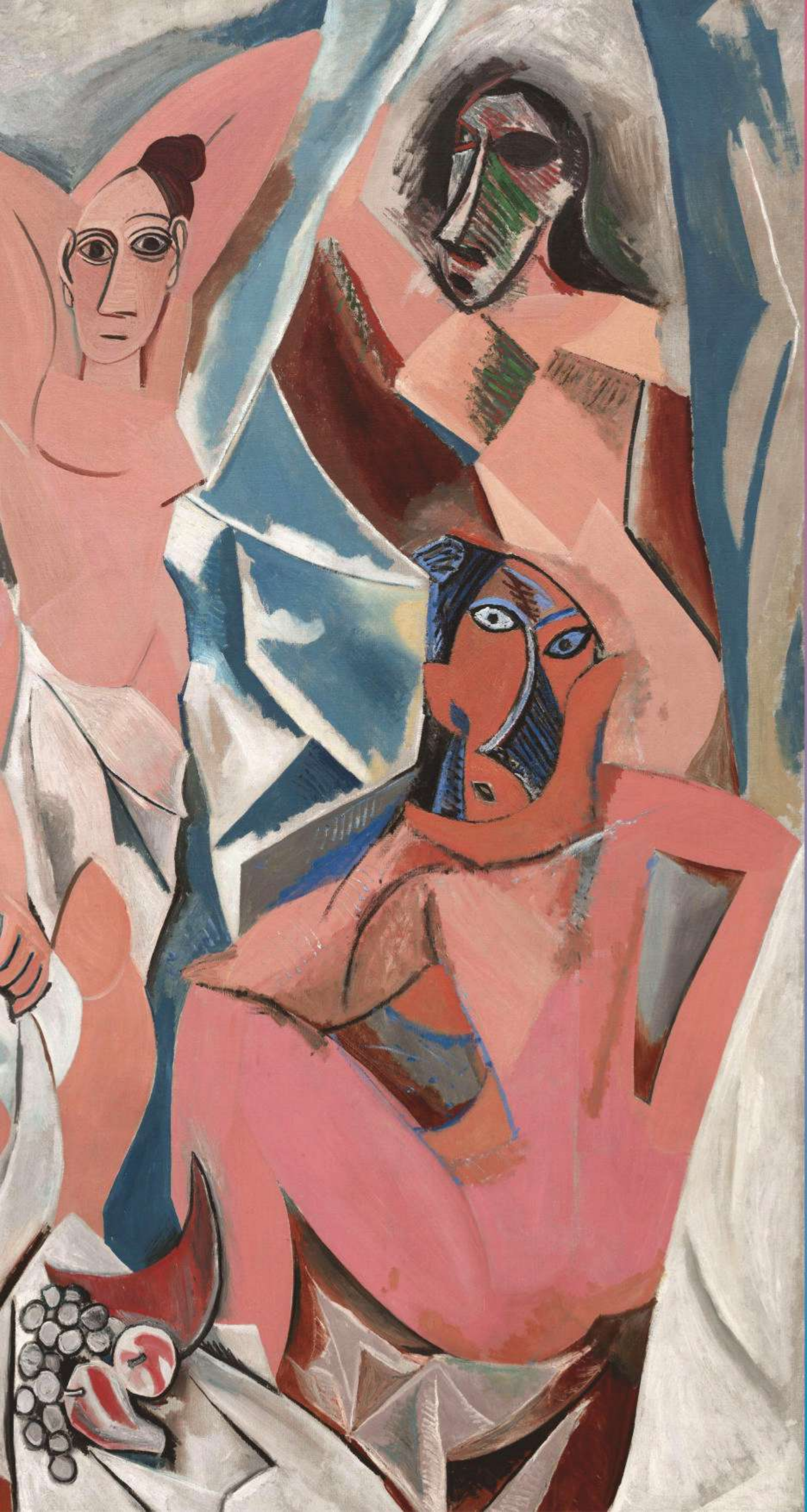
# Picasso's PERIODS



Picasso's *Les Demoiselles D'Avignon*, an African-inspired proto-Cubist work



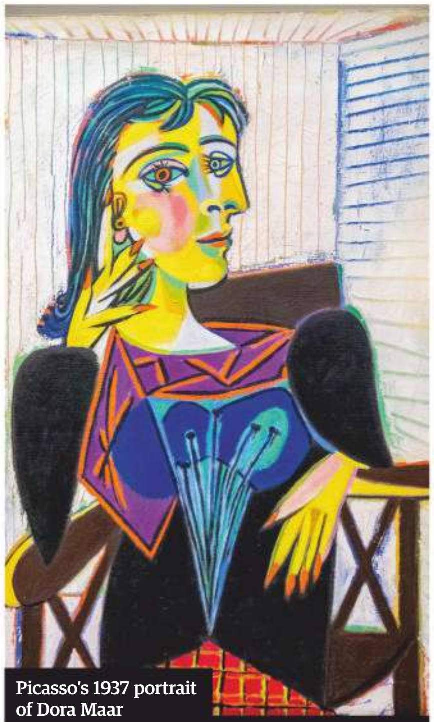
# Pablo Picasso is widely recognised as one of the greatest artists of the 20th century, whose work developed through distinctive periods affected by events in the artist's complex life

**Written by Mark Dolan**

Pablo Picasso was born on 25 October 1881, into an artistic, middle-class family. His father, Jose 'Pepe' Ruiz Blasco - a painter, an art teacher at the Malaga School of Fine Arts and curator of the city's municipal museum - was a huge influence on his son, who watched him work and took regular trips to the museum with him. Not an academic child, Picasso spent his school days drawing and cutting figures out of paper. Blessed with an accommodating teacher, he was allowed to bring a pigeon into class, which he would sketch.

In 1891, after the closure of the Malaga municipal museum, Picasso moved with his family to A Coruña, where he enrolled in the Institute of Fine Arts and began working in new mediums, such as pastels and pencils. Soon after, Picasso moved again, this time to Barcelona. At just 14 years old, he was accepted into the Barcelona School of Fine Arts. Over the next eight years, Picasso studied and worked to improve his technique, producing studies of classical Greek and Roman sculpture and working in traditional styles.

Towards the end of the century, Picasso drifted away from the academic approach and fell in with a group of artists and writers who congregated at a local bar, Els Quatre Gats. They embraced Impressionistic approaches to art, utilising the bright colours and simple shapes of the French Art Nouveau and focusing their work on political anarchy and social causes. From this time, Picasso's work would go on to be defined in set periods.



Picasso's 1937 portrait of Dora Maar

## Picasso's women (and girls)

"If not for his art, he'd just be another monster, treating women terribly," wrote art critic Adrian Searle of Picasso. He was, undeniably, an artistic genius, but the painter's relationships with women throughout his life were abusive, unfaithful, obsessive and unequal. His two wives and six mistresses inspired his art and acted as his muses, but also took care of the day-to-day unglamorous tasks that allowed the man to focus on his art. In return, Picasso routinely abused them, once growing so jealous of his first lover, Fernande Olivier, after she cheated on him (while he was also cheating on her) that he reportedly locked her in his studio after he left. Eva Gouel followed Olivier, staying beside Picasso for three years until a diagnosis of tuberculosis briefly preceded Picasso cheating on her with Russian ballerina Olga Khokhlova. The two married and had a son, but Picasso's frequent infidelity led her to suffer a mental breakdown. One of Picasso's mistresses during his marriage to Khokhlova was 17-year-old Marie-Thérèse Walter, who fell pregnant by the 46-year-old painter, but followed the set path in eventually leaving him, fed up of his constant cheating. The pattern repeated again through Dora Maar, 21-year-old Françoise Gilot, 24-year-old Genevieve Laporte and finally, 27-year-old Jacqueline Roque, whom he married at the age of 79. Perhaps Maar summed him up most succinctly when she told him that "as an artist you may be extraordinary, but morally speaking you are worthless".

### 1901–04 Blue

It was one of the Modernists of Els Quatre Gats and a close friend of Picasso, Carlos Casagemas, who would inadvertently spark the first of Picasso's distinct artistic periods: the Blue Period. On 17 February 1901, while in Spain, Picasso received news of Casagemas's suicide in Paris. It affected him greatly, and he started a series of paintings tinged blue, with melancholic themes and imagery. In *Blue Self Portrait* (1901), he depicts himself with drawn features and a pale, bluish countenance, looking well beyond his 20 years. Over the next three years, Picasso's works depicted themes of loneliness, despair and poverty with a blue palette, creating a body of work that perfectly encapsulated the emotional state of the still-young painter.

### 1904–06 Rose

In 1904, Picasso moved back to Paris, settling in the artistic district of Bateau-Lavoir, surrounded again by bohemian creatives including Guillaume Apollinaire and Max Jacob. His work began to move away from the bleakness of the Blue period, with the artist painting lighter scenes including carnivals, circus performers and clowns in a palette of reds and pinks. It was during this period that Picasso met Gertrude Stein and her brother Leo, whose salons held on Saturday nights at their house were replete with the city's artistic and intellectual elite, including Henri Matisse. Towards the end of this period, in 1906, Picasso's fortunes really began to change, when his work caught the attention of the art dealer Ambroise Vollard. Vollard was a renowned talent spotter, having played a pivotal role in launching the careers of artists such as Paul Cézanne, Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Vincent van Gogh, and his patronage was a major turning point in Picasso's career.

### 1907–09
### African and Proto-Cubism

The freedom brought about by his upturn in fortunes enabled Picasso to travel, spending the summer of 1906 in Gosol with his then-lover Fernande, painting the landscapes and finding inspiration in the art of pre-Roman Iberia. Returning to Bateau-Lavoir, he pursued the new direction his art had taken, but still hadn't found the spark that would really come to define his career and legacy. This spark would come in the spring of 1907, when Picasso was attending a salon at the Steins', and Matisse arrived clutching a statue he'd stopped to buy on the way from a 'curio-shop'. The statue was created by the Vili people of the Democratic

**ABOVE** The interior of Els Quatre Gats, the meeting place of the Spanish Modernists

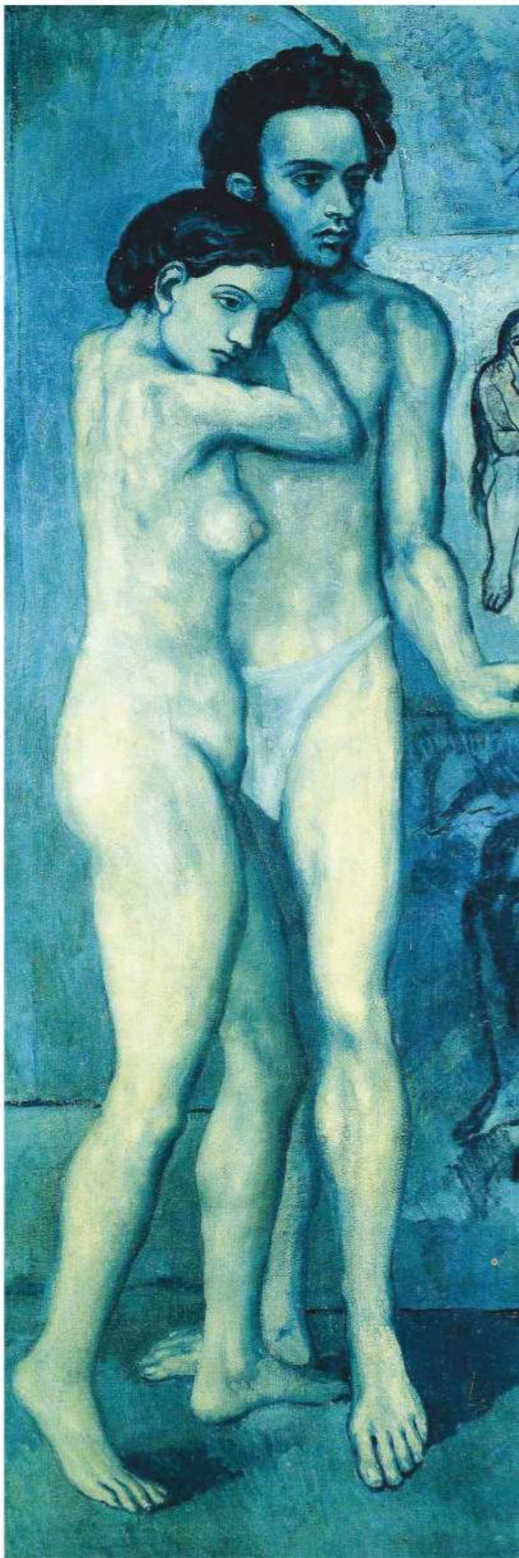
**RIGHT** *La Vie*, one of Picasso's greatest Blue period paintings

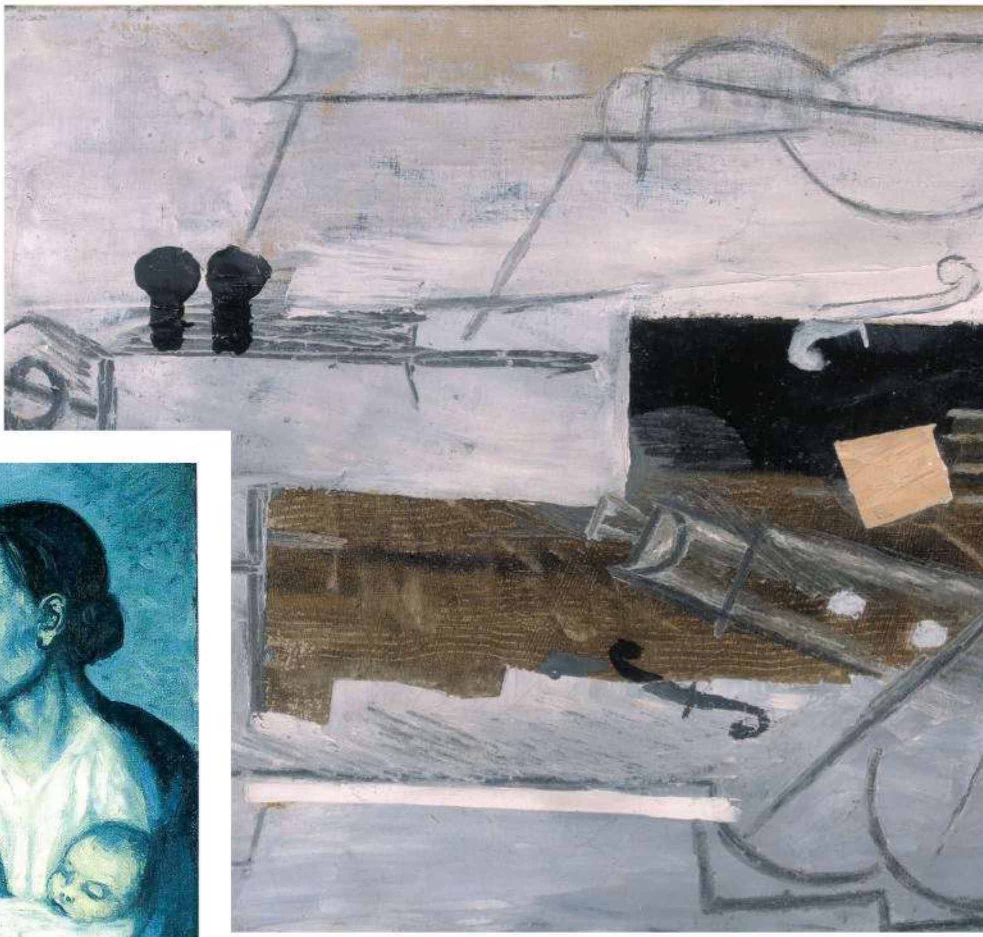
**TOP RIGHT** *Clarinet and Violin*, one of Picasso's Synthetic Cubist pieces

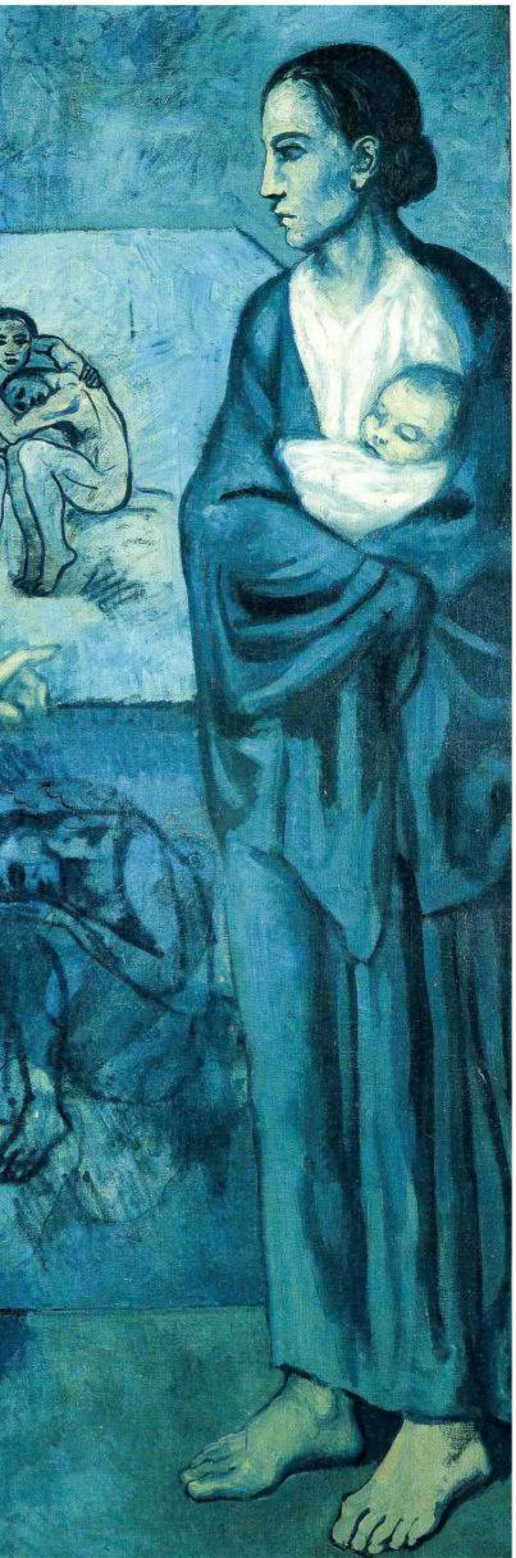
**RIGHT INSET** A 19th-20th century Dan mask

**FAR RIGHT** The Vili statue Matisse brought to the Steins' salon

(Credit Auburnmtst)

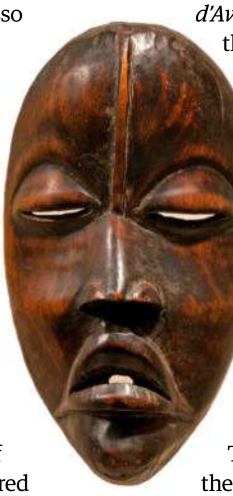






Republic of the Congo in the late 19th-20th centuries, and had an immediate and profound impact on Picasso. Having grown tired of the European artistic scene, he had been searching for inspiration somewhere else, and Matisse's chance buy moved something in him. Picasso was known to have a penchant for the transformative power of objects and art, and the statue's elongated features, sharp lines and streamlined form affected him deeply.

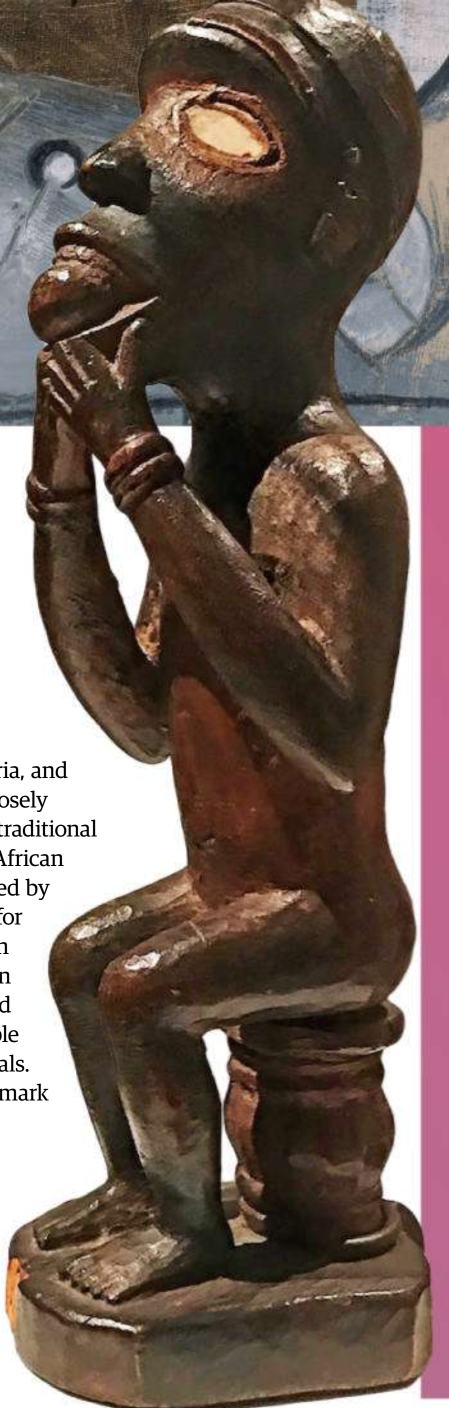
A few days later, Picasso and fellow artist André Derain visited the Trocadero Museum, the premier ethnographic museum in Paris, to examine more of the so-called 'primitive' art of Africa. Although almost put off by the, as he put it, "smell of mould and neglect", he persevered nonetheless and examined the museum's collection of African masks, finding a new perspective on art, later recalling that "those objects that people had created with a sacred and magical purpose [made him understand] what painting really meant. It is not an aesthetic process, it is a form of magic."

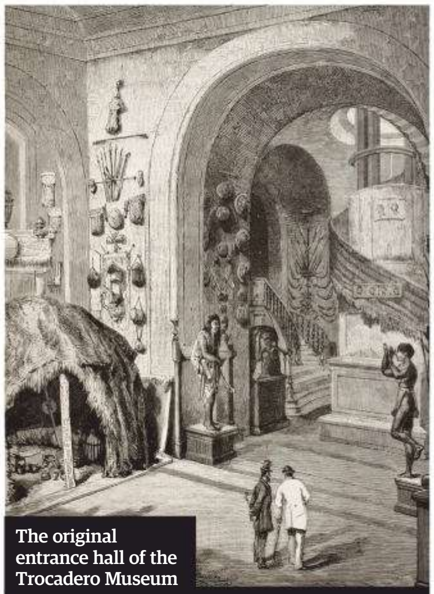


After this transformative experience, Picasso returned to a work-in-progress depicting five women in a brothel. The final version of this painting, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907), depicts three women painted in an angular style reminiscent of the ancient art of Iberia, and two with faces closely resembling two traditional ritual masks of African cultures; one used by the Dan people for communing with the spirits, and an Mbuya mask, used by the Pende people in circumcision rituals. These stylised forms mark the genesis of Cubism.

### 1909–15 **Cubism**

From this point, Picasso began to experiment more with the building blocks of Cubism. This sub-period, known as Analytic Cubism, gave rise to

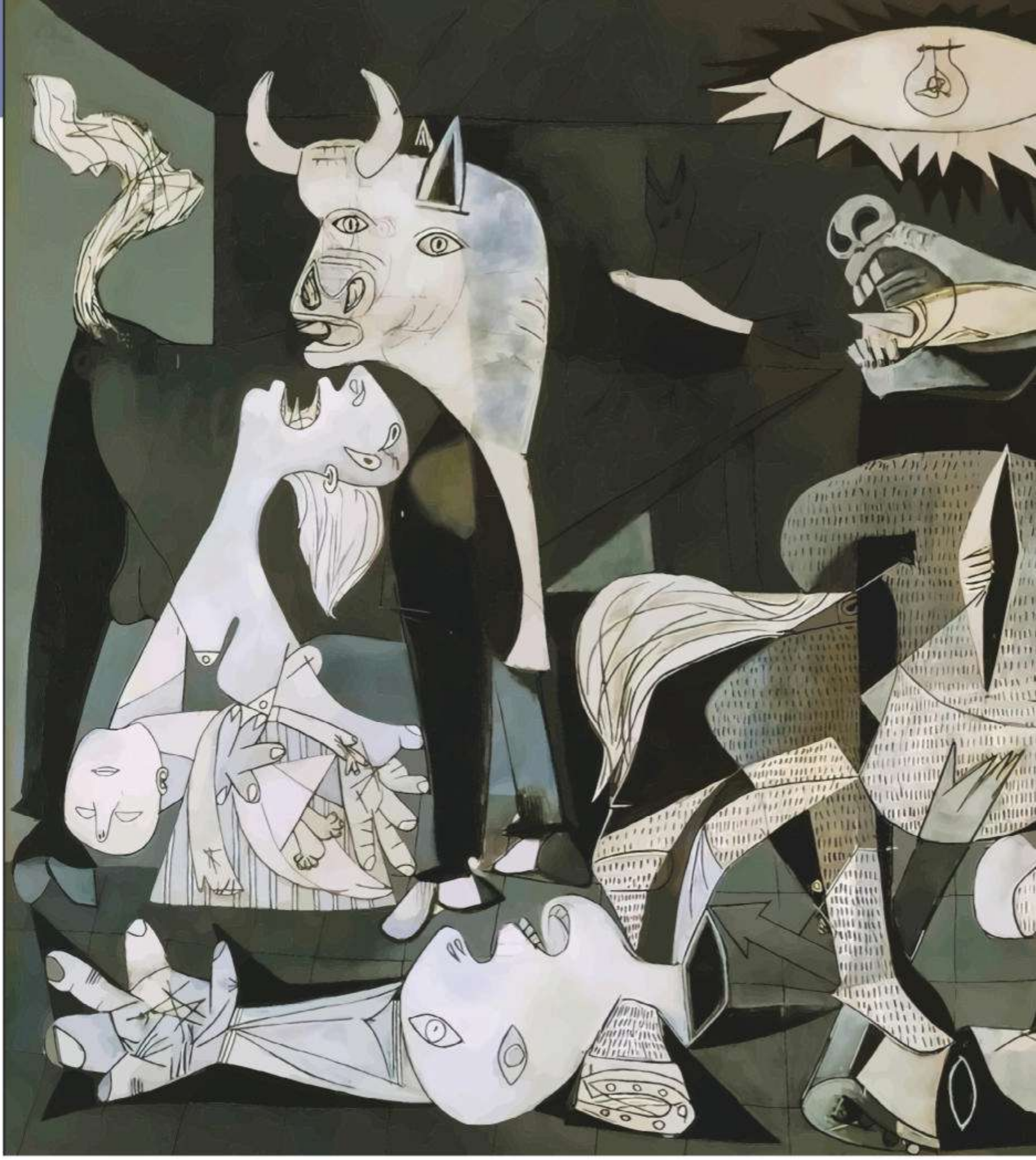




The original entrance hall of the Trocadero Museum

## Inspiration or appropriation?

The influence that Picasso's encounter with African art had on his later work seems indubitable, and most art historians have little trouble believing it. However, he later claimed that although his visit to the Trocadero Museum was an experience that changed him, he did not draw inspiration from the African art contained in the museum's collection. Perhaps his denial was to avoid people looking for the original masks that he seems to have used as models for the faces of the women in *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, which made his faces seem little more than pale imitations rather than the groundbreaking new style that he allowed them to be interpreted as. Picasso was certainly interested in the African art, which he viewed staunchly through the prism of 'primitivism', evidenced by his significant collection of African art, but whether he credited the creators of these pieces with the innovation and artistry that people ascribed to him is doubtable. His view of the cultures that produced these pieces as little more than primitive savages suggests not a respectful inspiration, but a claiming of style in keeping with the European colonialism of his younger years.



**ABOVE** *Guernica,* one of Picasso's greatest ever paintings, was painted to commemorate the Nazi bombing of Guernica

**RIGHT** A Rose period painting by Picasso, *Family of Saltimbanques* (1905)

works with geometric shapes, particularly cubes, rectangles and cylinders, whose sides would cross over one another, obscuring the natural lines of the subject matter. These paintings grew increasingly abstracted from reality. In 1912, this began to frustrate Picasso, and he altered the direction of his Cubist work towards a new form, that of Synthetic Cubism. This involved incorporating more tangible aspects of the recognisable material world, such as oilcloth and rope, into works that had an Cubist base.

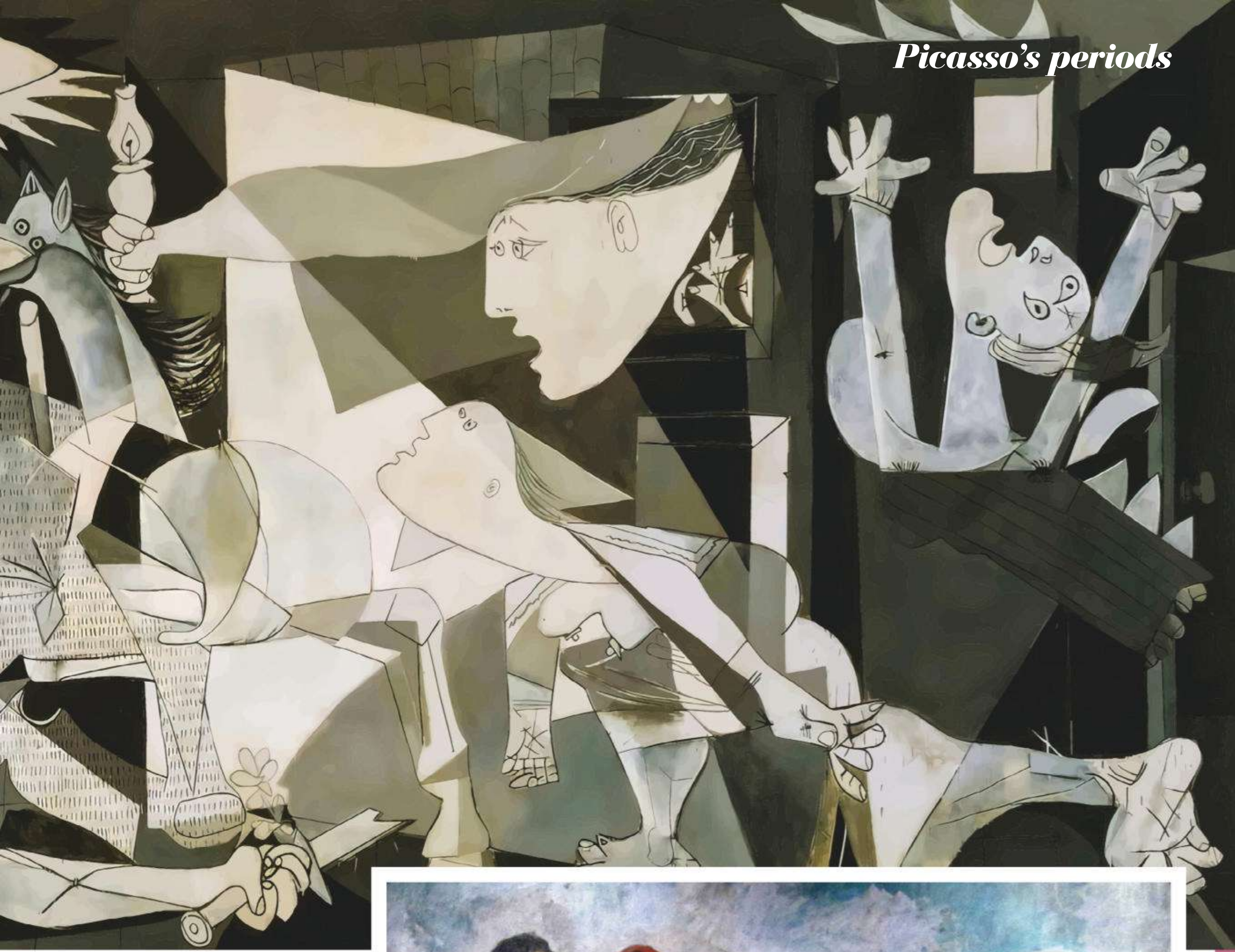
### 1918–35

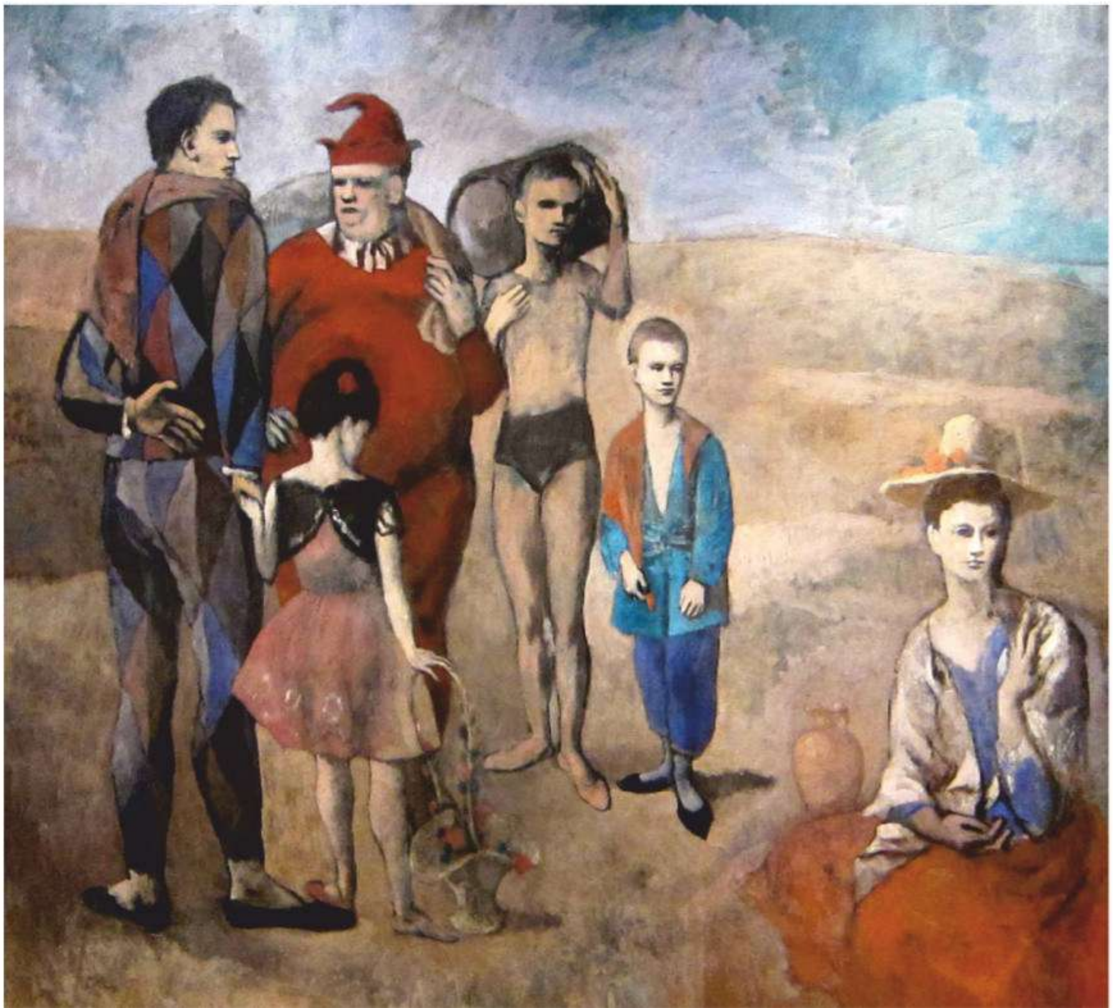
## Neoclassicism and Surrealism

Picasso's Cubist period is arguably his most recognisable, with fragmented faces and bodies closely associated with his name, but after the horrors of World War I, he moved away from Cubism to more realistic styles once again, entering what is often dubbed his Neoclassical period. These images brought back more recognisable motifs and brighter colour palettes, perhaps more reminiscent of his Rose period works, with a more active countenance and depiction once again of the performing and dramatic arts.

As the new movement of Surrealism began to build up steam, spearheaded by André Breton, Picasso let himself draw inspiration from his peers. While he never fully embraced the fundamentals of the movement, he began again to produce much more abstract works, often in three dimensions, combining the current vogue with his pre-existing interests in Cubism and material synthesis.

> "He began again to produce abstract works, often in three dimensions"





## *1936–45* Civil War

Just as WWI had marked a turning point in Picasso's art, so did World War II and the Spanish Civil War. Although living in France, he was deeply affected by the events in Spain, and began to meld his trademark artistic style, still steeped in Cubism, with anti-war and anti-fascist messages. It was during this period that he created one of his most famous and powerful paintings, *Guernica*, after Nazis bombed the small Spanish town.

For the rest of his life, Picasso would continue innovating and experimenting, bringing his ideas and techniques to a range of media and subjects, but would never again embark on such distinct periods as he had in his formative years. A man whose work drew from, worked through, and memorialised a series of tragic events, influences, affairs, friendships and conflicts, Picasso was an artist unlike any other. Changeable, but always growing, he created a body of work that has continued to amaze and inspire.

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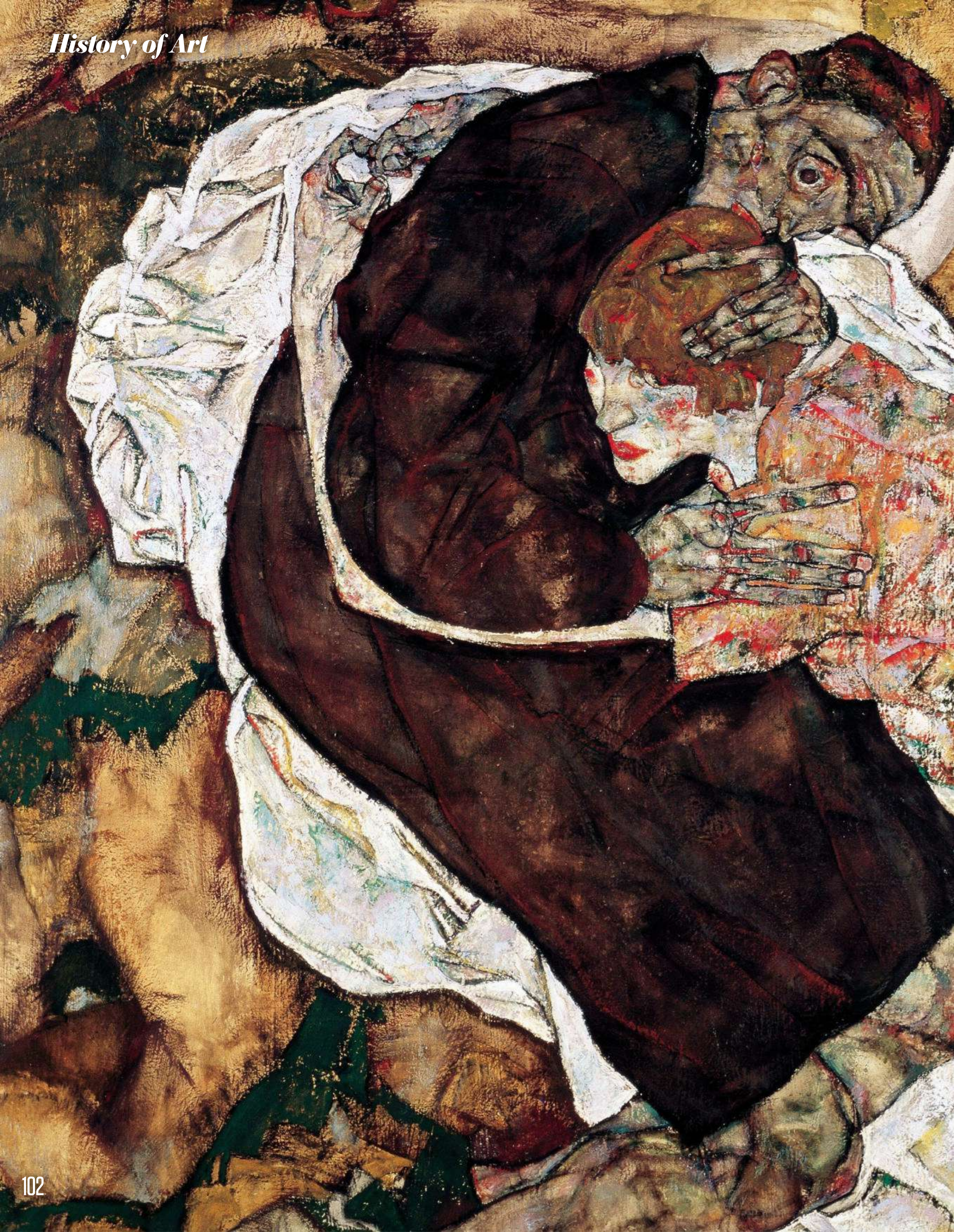
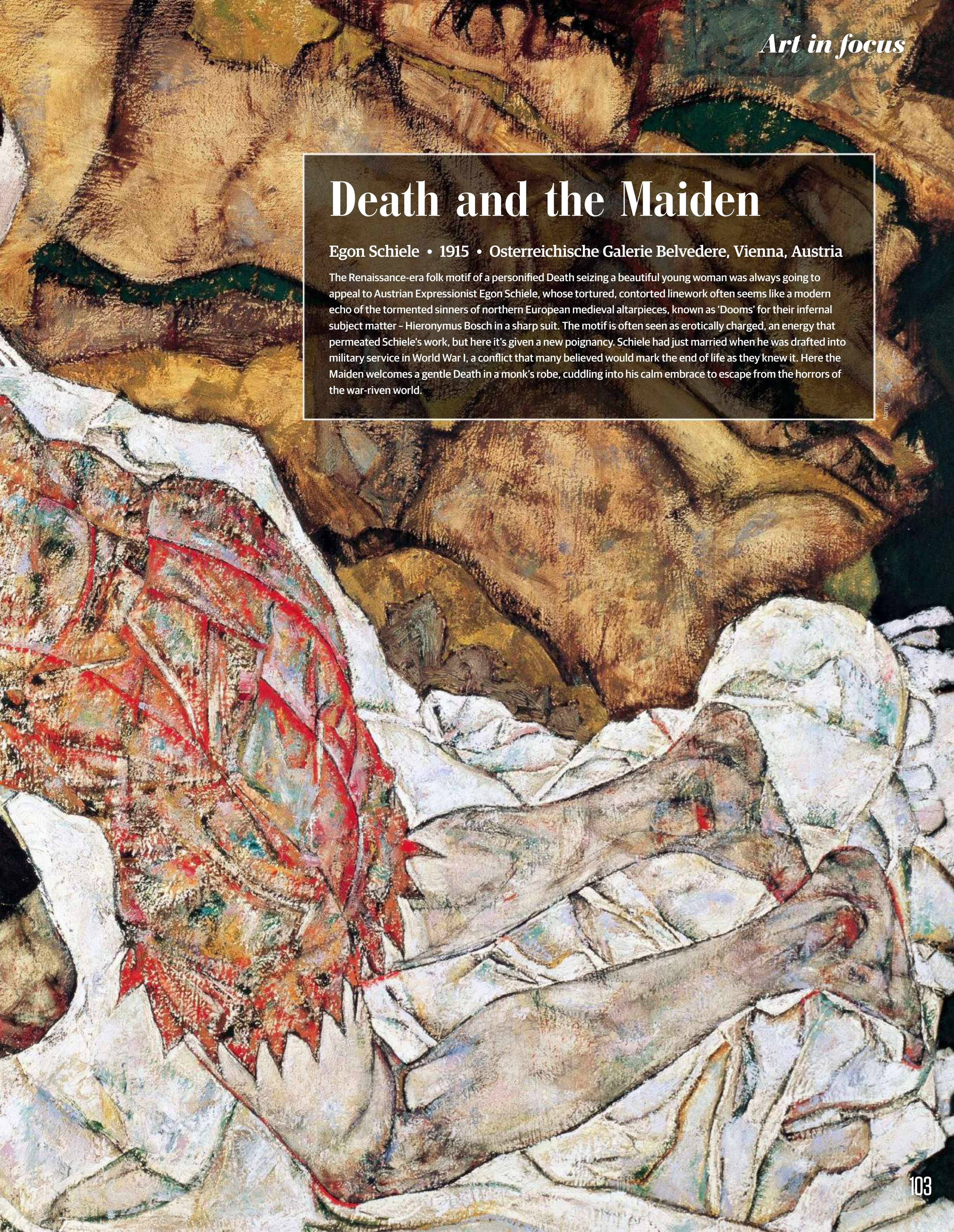


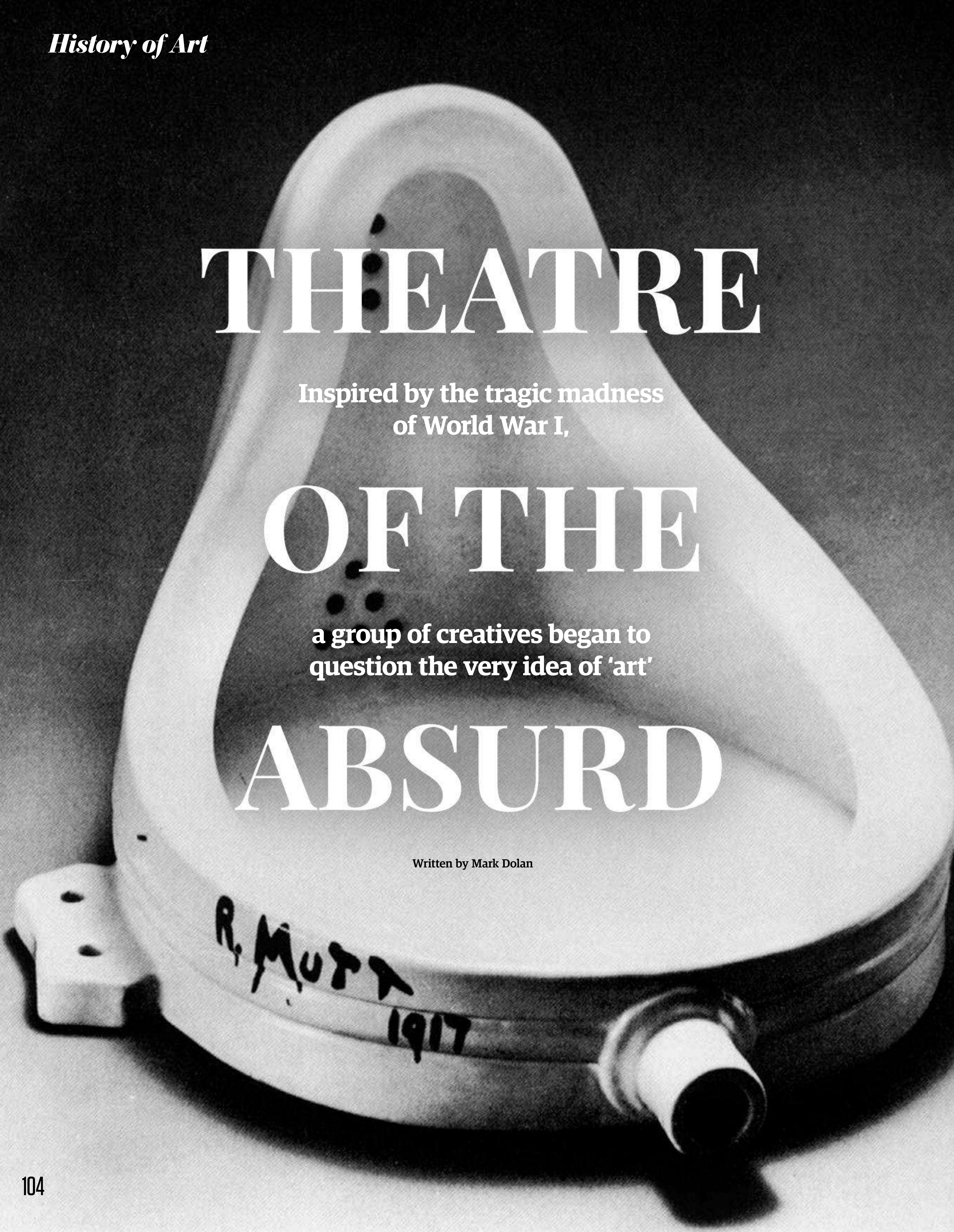


# Death and the Maiden

**Egon Schiele • 1915 • Osterreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna, Austria**

The Renaissance-era folk motif of a personified Death seizing a beautiful young woman was always going to appeal to Austrian Expressionist Egon Schiele, whose tortured, contorted linework often seems like a modern echo of the tormented sinners of northern European medieval altarpieces, known as 'Dooms' for their infernal subject matter – Hieronymus Bosch in a sharp suit. The motif is often seen as erotically charged, an energy that permeated Schiele's work, but here it's given a new poignancy. Schiele had just married when he was drafted into military service in World War I, a conflict that many believed would mark the end of life as they knew it. Here the Maiden welcomes a gentle Death in a monk's robe, cuddling into his calm embrace to escape from the horrors of the war-riven world.

Alamy



# THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

**Inspired by the tragic madness of World War I, a group of creatives began to question the very idea of 'art'**

Written by Mark Dolan

Artists are known to draw inspiration from a wide range of sources, but one of the most significant artistic movements of the 20th century arose not from the recognition of beauty or the desire to move people, but from the horror and senselessness of World War I. In the early 1910s, when Europe was awash with new ideas, from Einstein's scientific revelations about the fabric of the universe, to Marx's revolutionary call to arms overhauling the political landscape of the Western world, the art world was undergoing its own reckoning.

For a small group of artists, the outbreak of war was the natural consequence of decades, if not centuries, of art unquestionably supporting the status quo, and of society adhering blindly to cultural norms, increasingly repressive social values and corrupt, nationalistic politics. In Zurich, the largest city in neutral Switzerland, a small group of artists - including visual artists, performance artists, poets, dancers and writers - began a satirical movement that ridiculed the perceived sanctity of art, pointing out through the use of nonsensical verse and 'anti-art' the ludicrousness of so much violence for such silly causes. This movement became known as Dada, or Dadaism, and its genesis can arguably be traced to one short-lived club in Zurich - the Cabaret Voltaire - founded by Hugo Ball, Emmy Hennings and a group of like-minded contemporaries in 1916.

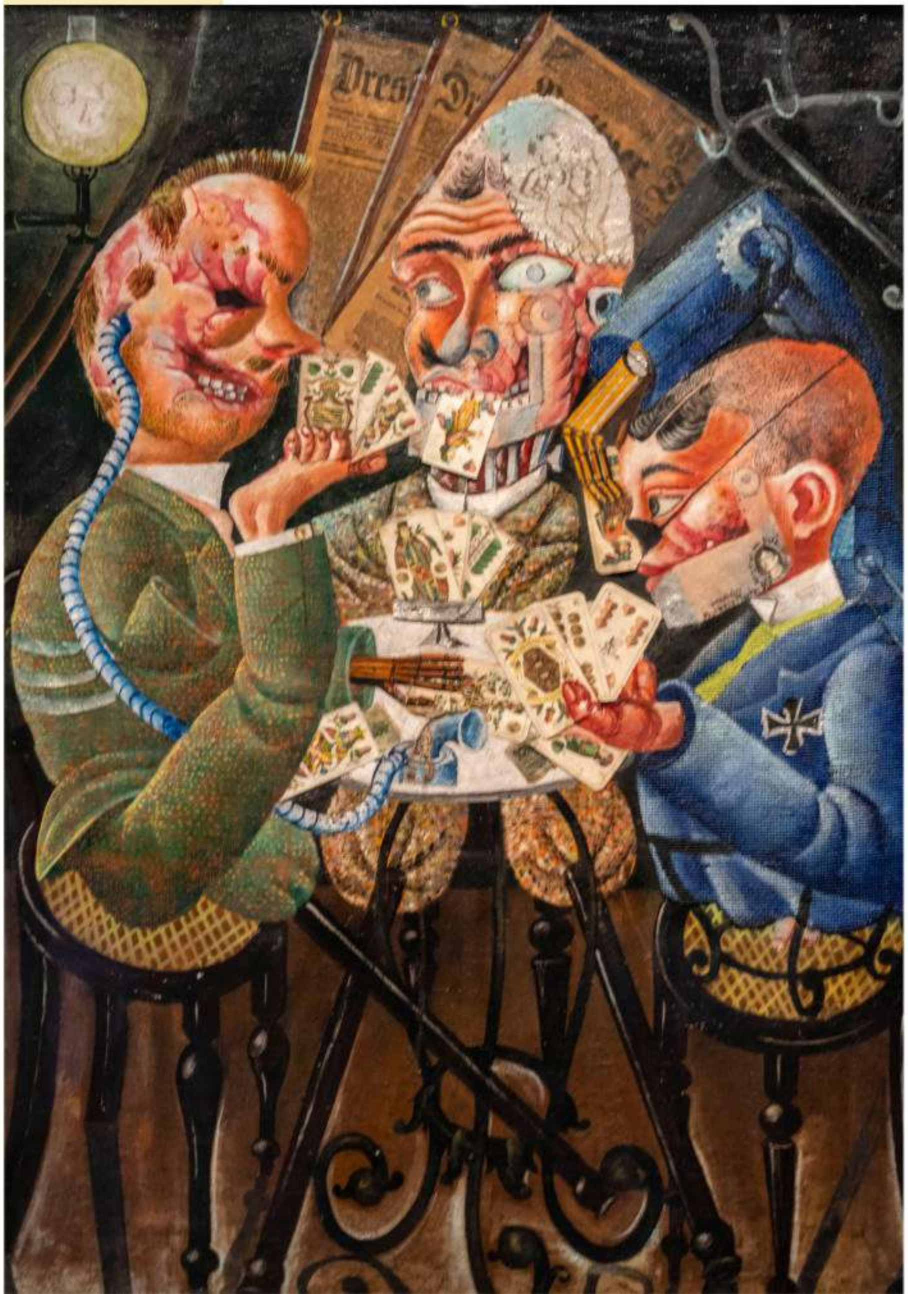
Neutral Switzerland was the ideal place for these irreverent creatives to put forth their ideas, and one of the founders of the Cabaret Voltaire, German writer Hugo Ball, gave a reading of a new poem which began "gadji beri bimba / glandridi lauli lonni cadori…". This was an intentionally utterly meaningless poem, used to shock people who still believed in the so-called noble

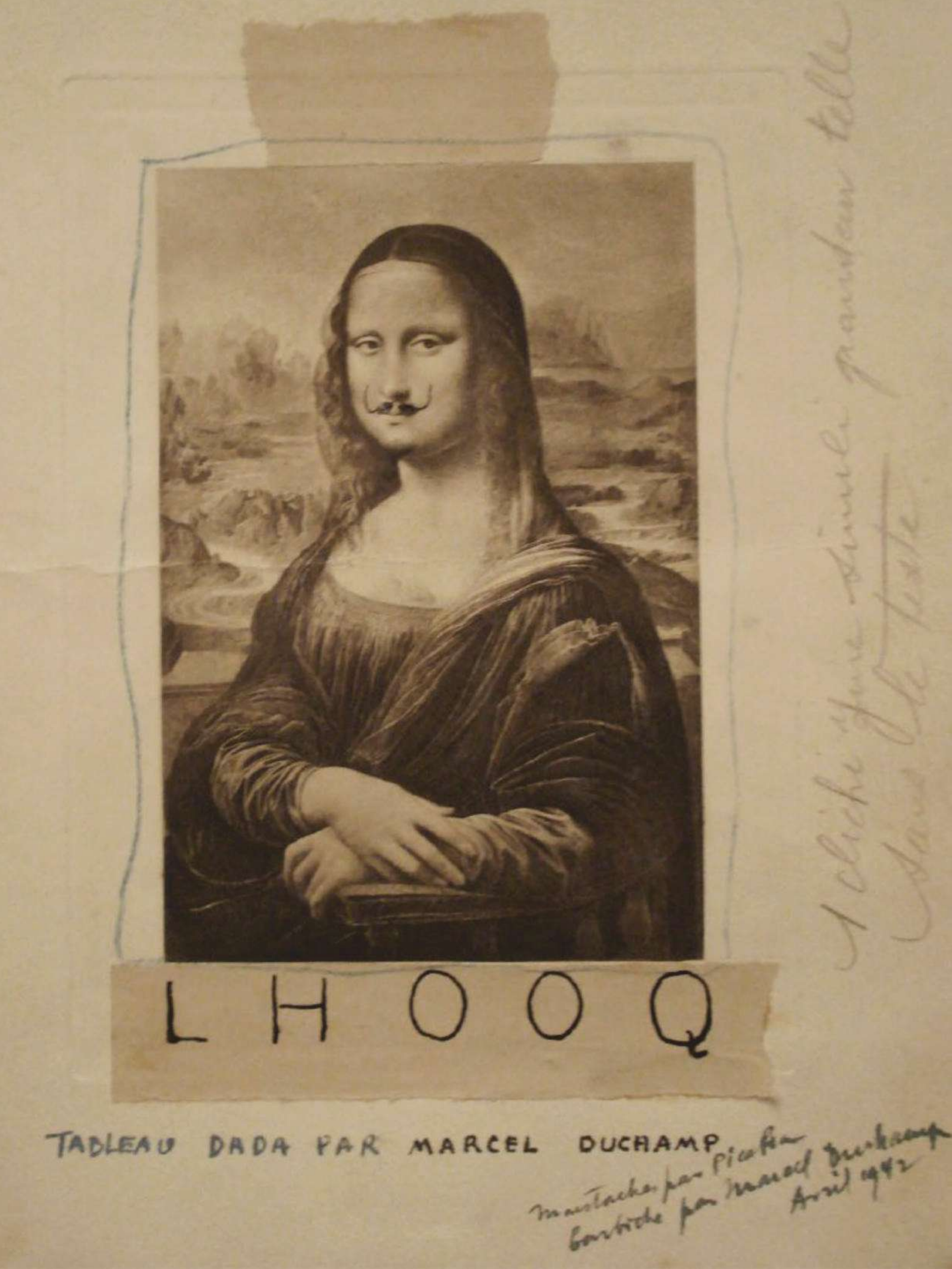
**LEFT** Duchamp's *Fountain* was lost, assumed to have been disposed of by an unknowing cleaner

**RIGHT** Emmy Hennings with her husband Hugo Ball, two of the founders of the Cabaret Voltaire

**BELOW LEFT** The interior of the Cabaret Voltaire, birthplace of the Dada movement

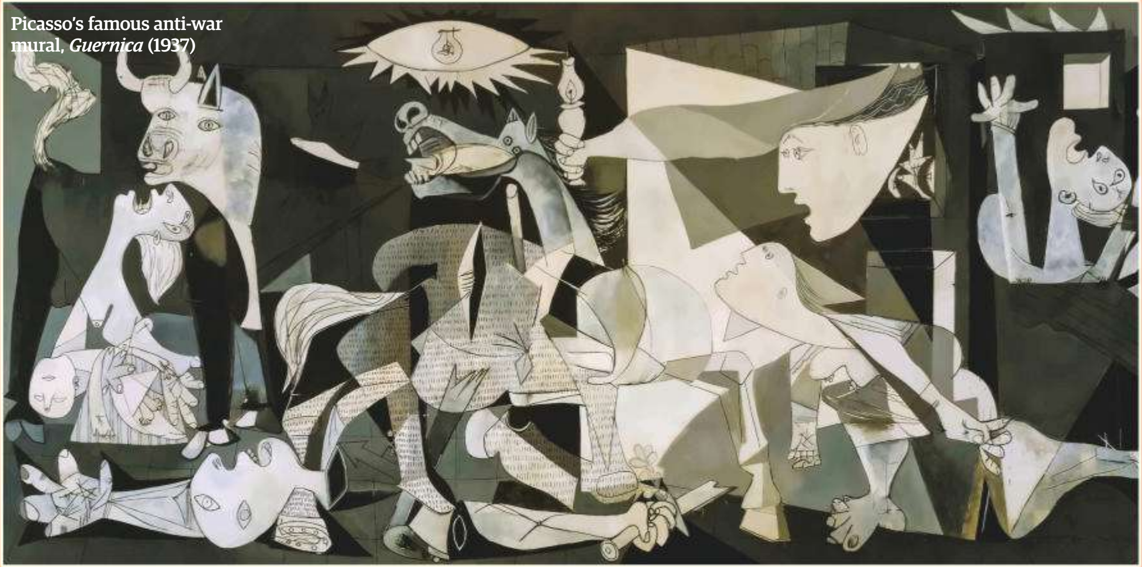
**BELOW RIGHT** Otto Dix's 1920 painting *Skat Players,* showing injured former military officers playing some cards




LHOOQ
TABLEAU DADA PAR MARCEL DUCHAMP
moustache par Picabia
barbiche par Marcel Duchamp
Avril 1942
dans le texte

# Pablo Picasso: artist and anti-fascist

## The political art of the Cubist genius



Picasso's famous anti-war mural, *Guernica* (1937)

One of the most famous artists of the 20th century, Pablo Picasso produced possibly the most iconic piece of anti-war art – his 1937 piece, Guernica. Picasso had been living through Spain during the Spanish Civil War and was deeply affected by the horrors that took place around him. The large monochromatic oil painting depicted, in Picasso's impactful Cubist style, the terror of the bombing of the town of Guernica by the Nazis and Italian fascists, and was intended to stand as a monument to the evil of Franco and the fascists. Its power is highlighted by its exile by Franco after he managed to gain power.

Picasso became more staunchly anti-fascist in the following years, joining the French Communist Party, creating numerous works explicitly criticising Fascist policy and action and using his celebrity status to drum up support for the anti-fascist cause.

"Duchamp's readymades remained steeped in the desire to change what art could be"

causes that nations were wasting life over, whether the high culture of Germany, the enlightenment of France, or the empire of Britain, what Ball himself called "civilised carnage as a triumph of European intelligence".

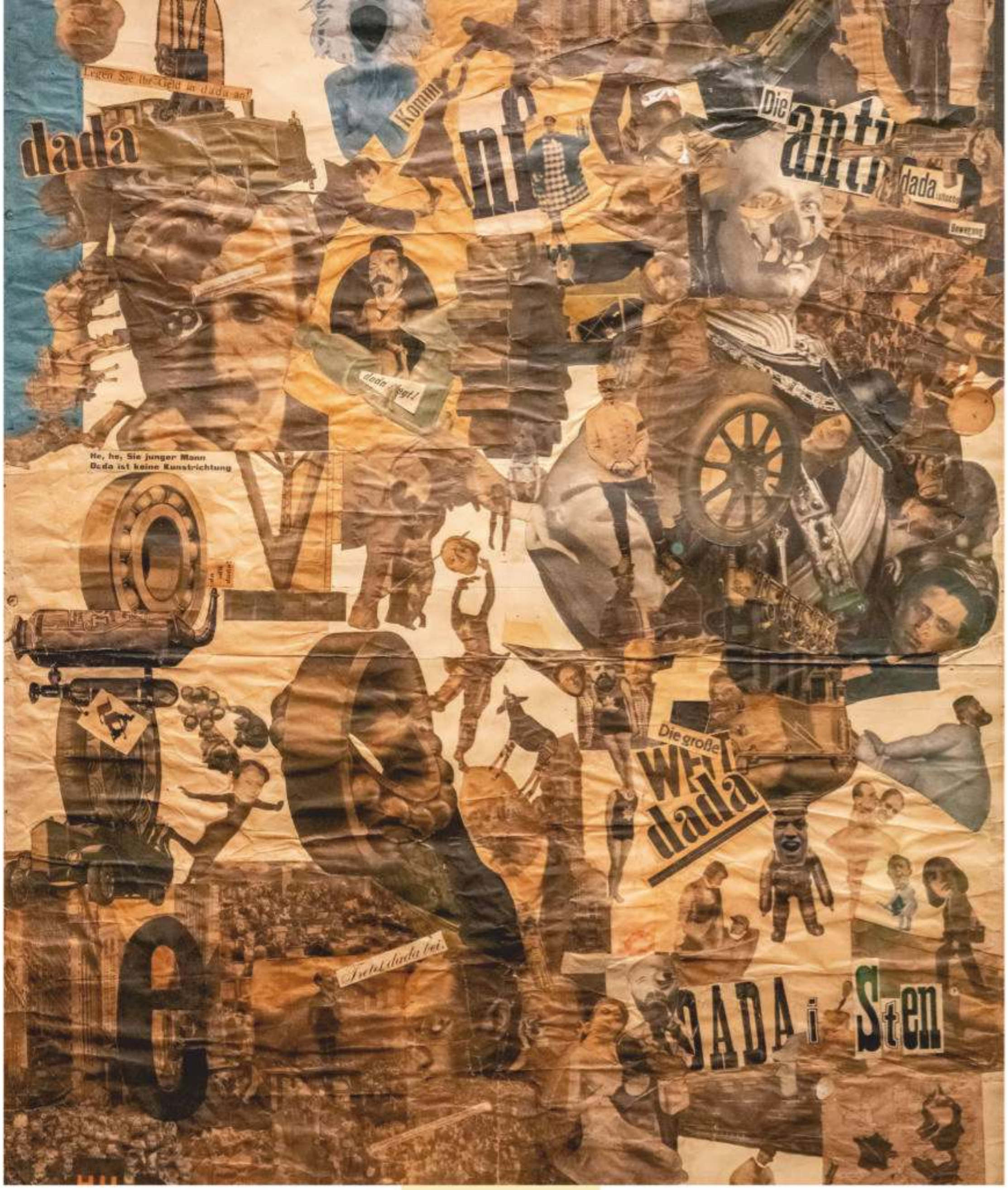
The Dadaists believed that it was futile to try to rationalise the irrational underpinnings of the conflict and decided instead that the most impactful thing art was able to do was to shine a light on it by intentionally leaning into anti-establishment sentiments, leading people to question the assumptions that led to the outbreak of such a tragic war. If this was the outcome of reason and enlightenment, they reflected, then it was much better to embrace the absurd.

Towards the end of the war, Dadaism spread further afield, with major hubs in Paris, Berlin and New York, bringing with it the anti-war and anti-establishment ideals of the movement. A major part of this was a reconsidering of what art was and what could be art. One of the most influential and famous Dadaists was Marcel Duchamp, a French artist who moved to New York in the latter years of the war. Having rejected the work of his contemporaries as intended to please only the eye, he turned to a more purely conceptual form of art, his series of readymades. Believing that art should not be sanctified in the way that had helped build the nationalist and imperial sentiments underpinning the breakout of World War I, he challenged the very idea of what art was by taking objects that were ostensibly mundane and presenting them instead as objets d'art. The most famous of his readymades was his 1917 work, *Fountain*, a standard urinal that he put on its side and signed with the pseudonym 'R Mutt'. Although not as straightforwardly anti-war as some other artworks, Duchamp's readymades remained steeped in the desire to change what art could be, to avoid it playing the same role in the promotion of nationalism that Duchamp had borne witness to.

Other Dadaists were more direct in the use of their art to criticise war. Otto Dix, a German artist who had initially greeted the war with excitement, became disillusioned by his experience of trench warfare and turned to Dadaism after the senseless violence he'd witnessed. One of his most famous pieces, *Skat Players* (1920) depicts, in an Impressionistic style, three German military officers playing cards, each having to hold his deck with toes, mouth or prosthetic leg due to the injuries they sustained in the conflict.

**LEFT** Marcel Duchamp's *L.H.O.O.Q.* Spoken aloud, it sounds like the French phrase, 'Elle a chaud au cul' – or 'she has a hot arse'

**RIGHT** The famously flamboyant and sexually adventurous Dada artist Baroness Elsa Von Freytag-Loringhoven



“Dadaism was a response to the madness of war, recognising the insanity”

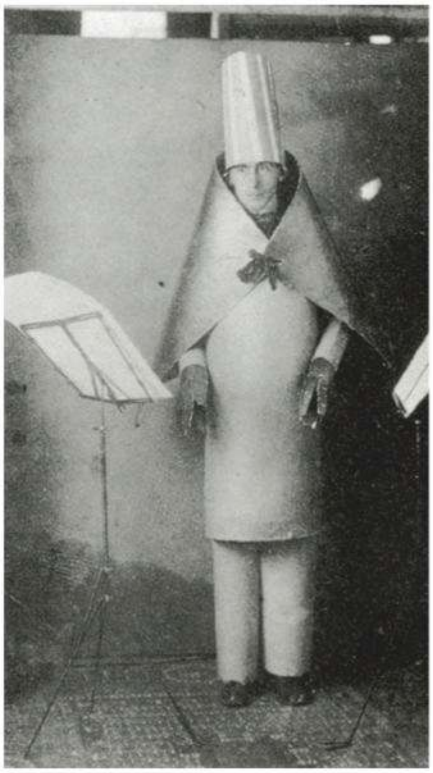
Women were central at every stage of Dadaism, from the foundation of the Cabaret Voltaire to its dissemination into Berlin and New York. Many were in relationships with male members of the movement, and have often been sidelined in the narrative, but all were important and influential artists in their own right. Along with the men forming the fundamental ideals of Dadaism in Switzerland were Emmy Hennings and Sophie Taeuber-Arp, both of whom were versatile multimedia artists, as well as talented dancers and cabaret performers, becoming key in the performative aspect of the early Dada work at the Cabaret Voltaire. While Hennings was primarily involved in the stage work, singing and reciting both poetry and prose in addition to her dancing, Taeuber-Arp was a successful textile artist, lecturer in textile design at the Zurich University of the Arts, painter, interior designer and sculptor, whose geometric designs drew on the popular Dada craft of collage and became early examples of Constructivism alongside those of Piet Mondrian.

**ABOVE** Hannah Höch’s famous photomontage *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer-belly Cultural Epoch in Germany* (1919)

**LEFT** The horror and violence of World War I was the catalyst for Dadaism

**RIGHT** Hugo Ball, founder of the Cabaret Voltaire, reciting poetry in a Cubist suit

**OPPOSITE TOP** One of Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s Constructivist textile compositions



As the movement spread to Germany, Hannah Höch emerged as one of the most prominent Dada artists. Her work, which heavily featured collage and photomontage techniques – both of which were classic Dada methods of incorporating the idea of found things – was overtly feminist, often showing women in the patriarchal roles they were shepherded into and playing with the ideas of traditional gender roles. One of her pieces, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada Through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany*, utilised her understanding of the media landscape of the Weimar Republic (having worked as a journalist in Germany since 1916), mocking the chaos of the government through a collage of newspaper and magazine cuttings, while also sarcastically referencing her status as a female artist with the specification of a kitchen knife in the work's title.

In New York, meanwhile, alongside the likes of Duchamp and Man Ray, Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven emerged on the scene. Having moved to the city in 1913, she fell in with the Dadaists and her bohemian lifestyle dovetailed perfectly with the movement's rejection of social norms. Freytag-Loringhoven was an exceptionally flamboyant character, sexually adventurous, open to experimentation and close to both lesbians and gay men. While her lifestyle fit with the Dadaists, she also happened to be an accomplished artist in her own right, creating, alongside Duchamp, a series of readymades and fighting against the patriarchal norms of the day.

At its core, Dadaism was a response to the madness of war, recognising the insanity in the mass sacrifice of human life for nationalistic and imperial pride. It was a movement that was far from limited to a desire for pacifism but sought to challenge the very foundations of the society that had allowed such a situation to develop. Although it was ultimately a short-lived movement, petering around in the mid-1920s, the influence that its progenitors had on both the art world and wider society is hard to overstate. It demonstrated the power of art and creativity in showing people alternative ways of living, challenging assumptions, and highlighting that major social conventions were not immutable, but created through continued adherence to the status quo and uncritical acceptance of art that maintains it.

## Art against war today

### The role of art in war is not a thing of the past

Art has had a complex relationship with war. It has been used to both drum up support for the causes of nations' wars and to create animosity towards the other side, as well as to highlight the negative aspects of war, its violence, reality and insanity. Even today, art has a strong relationship with war. While some nations' leaders will release images of themselves that contribute to a perception of grandeur, power or semi-divinity, other artists have found ways to use their work as a direct force for good. The foundation Artists Against War is a modern creation founded to support Ukraine in their defence against Russia. Ukrainian and other artists' works are reproduced and sold to raise funds for humanitarian causes and to fund defensive actions, though never to purchase arms or support aggressive military action.

Whether propagandistic, challenging perceptions or raising direct funds, art has always played a significant role in war, contributing to the world that leads to conflict and attempting to open people's eyes to the horrors and ludicrousness of war.

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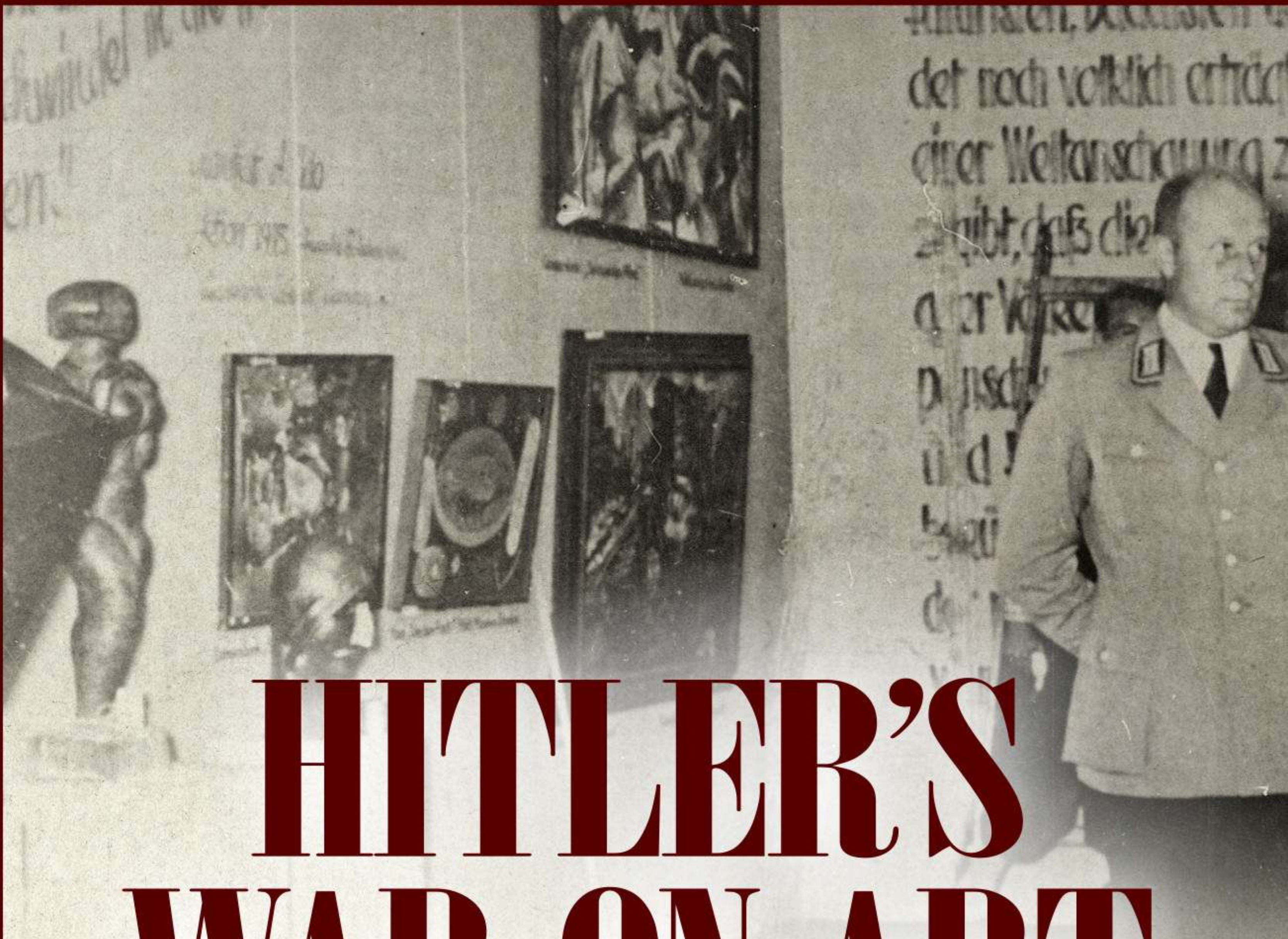
Modern anti-war street art protesting the war in Ukraine

© Alamy, Getty Images



# HITLER'S WAR ON ART

## Inside the 1937 exhibition of 'degenerate art' that the Nazis loved to hate

Written by Philippa Grafton

**"The 'Degenerate Art' exhibition is a gigantic success and a deadly blow," wrote Joseph Goebbels on 24 July 1937, five days after the show's opening.**

A hit in the eyes of Hitler's right-hand man and propaganda minister, the Degenerate Art exhibition was unlike any other exposition that had been put on in Germany before. This, after all, was one exhibition no artist wanted to be a part of, driven by hate, revulsion, rejection and, above all, retribution.

In the wake of World War I, Germany was a shattered nation. Lumped with crippling war reparations and led by an incompetent government, the country was tumbling into ruin. The emergence of a young, ambitious Adolf Hitler onto the political scene, however, soon changed the country's fortunes. Within years Hitler had soared through German politics and by 1934 he had manipulated his position and named himself Führer, and with this new title came absolute power.

But before his meteoric rise in politics, Hitler had dreamt of an entirely different life. In 1907 Hitler applied to the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, determined to pursue a career as an artist. He was rejected, but the young man was determined and applied again the following year. Once again he was rebuffed, beaten to this prize place by more expressive, experimental artists.

His creative ambition now relegated to a mere pipe dream, Hitler was bitter – and hellbent on revenge.

Upon achieving ultimate power, Hitler was determined to make Germany his own aesthetic paradise. While prized

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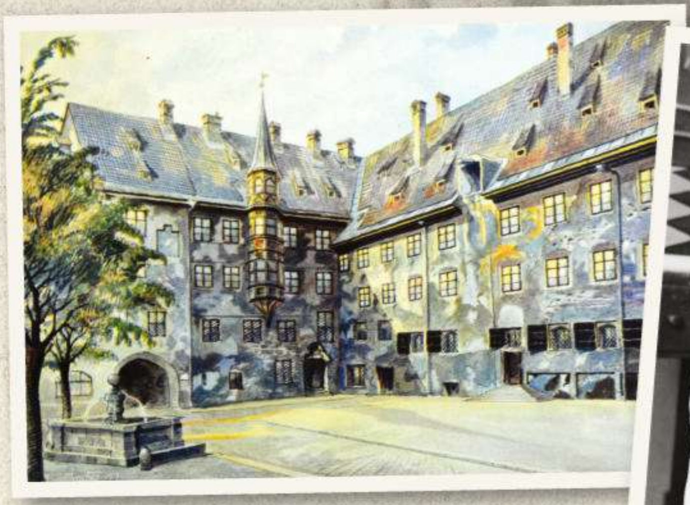
Hitler and Goebbels take a tour of the exhibition

Nazi architects, such as Paul Ludwig Troost and later Albert Speer, embarked on transforming Germany into a neoclassical haven, Hitler was preparing to strike his vengeful blow upon the art world that had rejected him almost three decades before.

In September 1933, Hitler had set up the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, with Joseph Goebbels at the helm. Finally Hitler had a means of ridding Germany of so-called 'degenerate' art, and Goebbels was tasked with pruning gallery collections, leaving



**ABOVE** A 1914 painting by Adolf Hitler. Hitler was rejected from art school twice

**RIGHT** Adolf Ziegler, the Nazi artist who Goebbels tasked with purging German galleries of 'degenerate' art

## TOO DEGENERATE TO EXHIBIT

Of all those showcased in the exhibition, one very vocal anti-Nazi artist was conspicuously absent…

Unashamedly anti-Nazi, John Heartfield was one of Hitler's biggest critics and at one point was fifth on the Gestapo's most-wanted list – so it's remarkable that this local dissenter didn't feature in the exhibition at all.

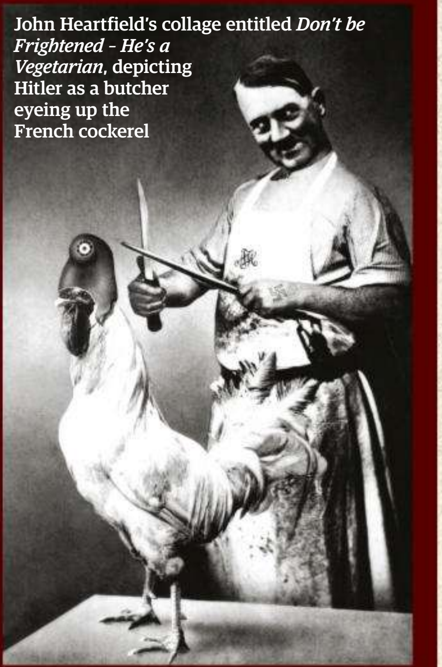
Born to German parents as Helmund Herzfeld in the late-19th century, he was called up to fight in World War I in September 1914.

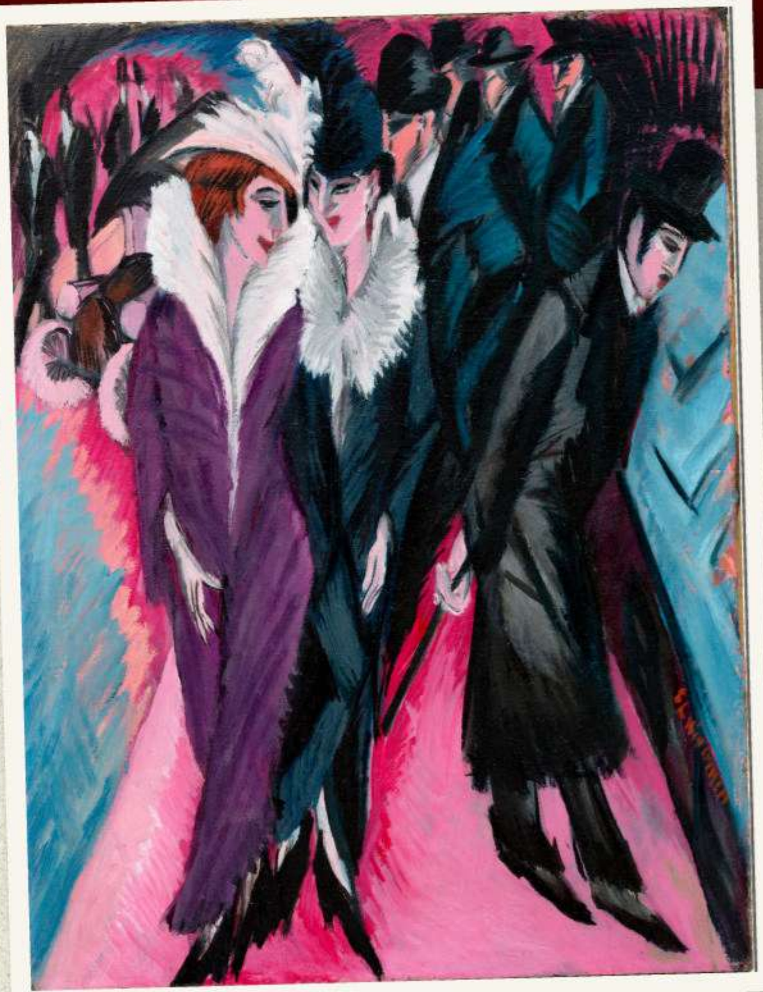
Convinced at the futility of war, however, Herzfeld feigned a mental breakdown and was dismissed from military service. It was impossible, he believed, to fight in a war that he deemed the greatest insanity of all. As anti-British sentiment swept Germany, he chose to Anglicise his name and became known as John Heartfield.

Upon moving to the capital, Heartfield became involved in the Berlin Dada scene, where he came to the realisation that creating art that wasn't anti-war was to be complicit in the government's propaganda campaign.

In response, he turned his back on traditional art and embraced photomontage, creating dozens of anti-war, anti-Hitler and anti-Nazi compositions that were published in several Communist and anti-fascist magazines.

Heartfield was an integral part of the artistic resistance against the Nazis, but by using the press rather than the canvas to voice his disdain for the regime, he ensured that he wasn't an easy figure to attack. After all, Heartfield's press-published collages were impossible to round up and destroy; they could just as easily return with a vengeance.


John Heartfield's collage entitled *Don't be Frightened - He's a Vegetarian*, depicting Hitler as a butcher eyeing up the French cockerel


**ABOVE** Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's 1913 painting *The Street* was exhibited at the Degenerate Art show

only 'true' art. Goebbels, however, didn't share Hitler's artistic vision.

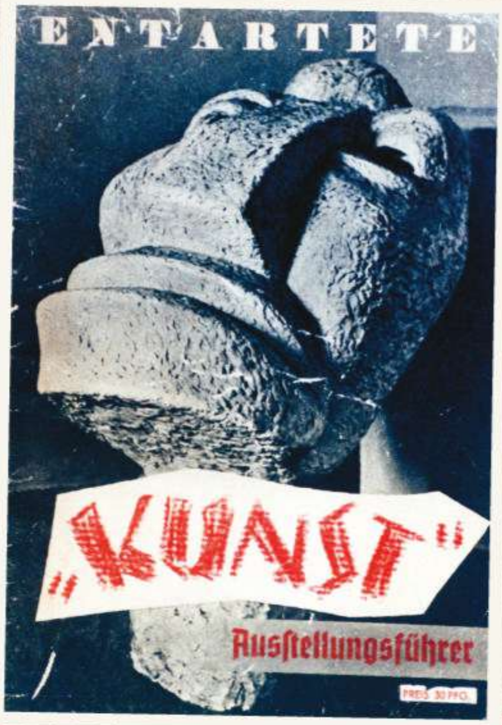
A divide sprung up in the Nazi Party on the topic of expressionism – on one side stood Goebbels, an enthusiastic patron of expressionist painters, and on the other loomed the prominent Nazi theorist Alfred Rosenberg, who saw expressionism as the decay of humanity. After a year of fierce feuding, the matter was resolved when Hitler finally sided with Rosenberg, condemning expressionism as the antithesis of Nazi ideology.

In celebration of Nazi-approved art, the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda planned a brand-new annual exhibit, the Great German Art exhibition, intended to celebrate the 'true' artists of the Third Reich. Artists were invited to submit their works to a judging panel and of the thousands of submissions, over 600 artworks were chosen to feature. In the weeks leading up to this illustrious exhibition, however, Hitler visited Munich's House of Art, where the exhibition was to be held. The visit did not go to plan, with Goebbels later writing that Hitler was "wild with rage" at the selection. The judges were dismissed, and Hitler's photographer, Heinrich Hoffman, was drafted in to redevelop the exhibition at the last minute.

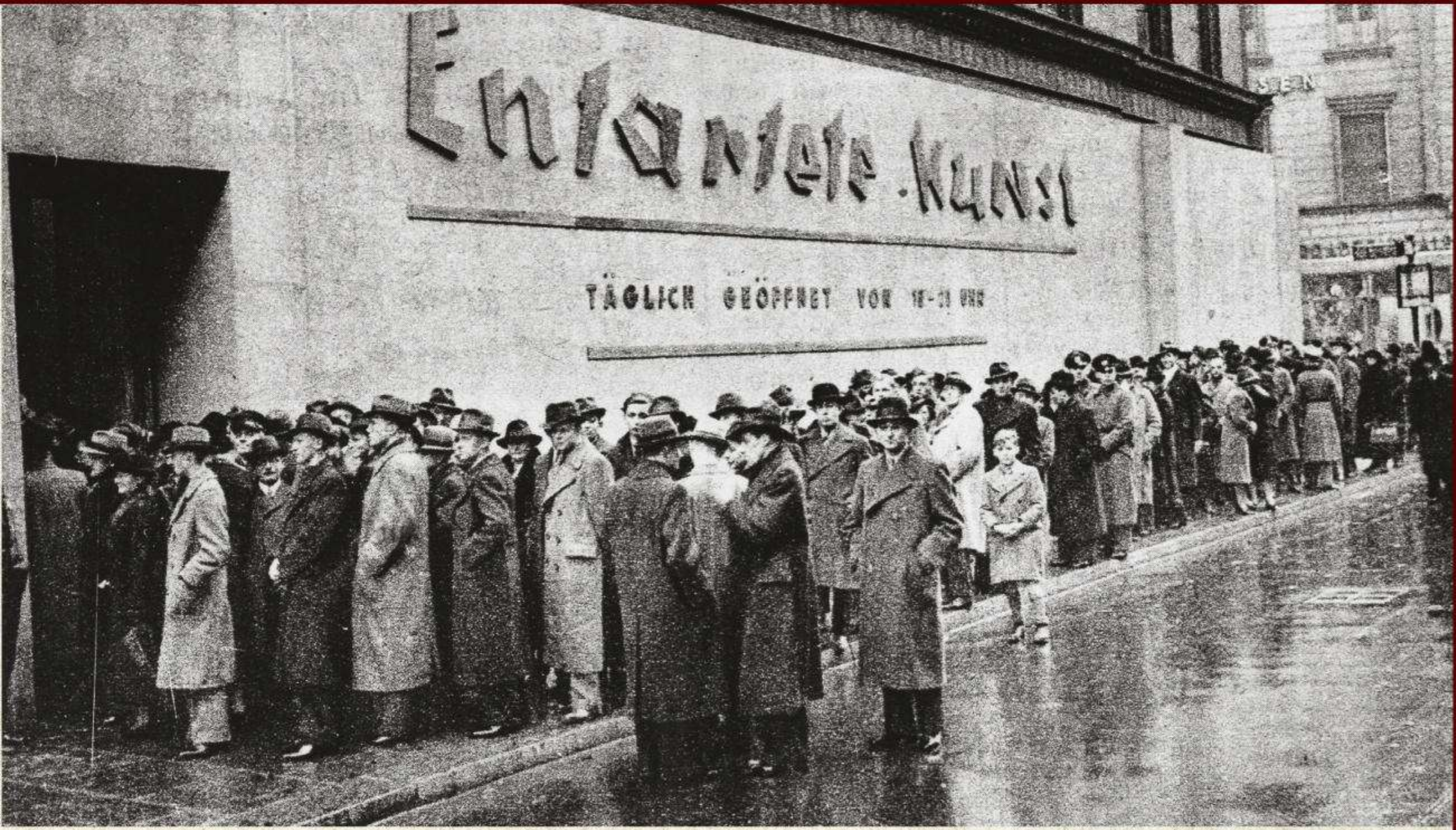
Dismayed at incurring the wrath of the Führer, Goebbels imagined a completely new kind of show to serve as a counter-exhibition to Great German Art. Desperate to regain Hitler's favour, Goebbels pitched an exhibition of degenerate art to highlight the disparity between 'traitorous' and 'patriotic' art. The idea went down a storm, and on 29 June Hitler officially gave his seal of approval.

The next day, Goebbels appointed Adolf Ziegler – Hitler's favourite painter (and later known as the 'Master of German Pubic Hair' for his nude paintings) – to head up a nationwide purge of the galleries, confiscating any works deemed degenerate. Ziegler was only too happy to comply, expelling thousands of works of art from the public view, over 650 of which would soon feature in the Degenerate Art exhibition. While works created by any artist deemed degenerate were rounded up, including works by Mondrian, Picasso and van Gogh, it was the work of German and Germany-based artists that were chosen for this very public humiliation.

In a matter of just two weeks, the exhibition was planned in its entirety. Held in Munich's Institute of Archaeology in the Hofgarten, the Degenerate Art exhibition was just round the corner from



**BELOW RIGHT** The catalogue cover of the 1937 Degenerate Art exhibition



the House of Art, the home of Hitler's Great German Art show. On 18 July 1937, the Great German Art exhibition opened with much fanfare – but the popularity of its counter-exhibition that opened the next day was unprecedented; over the course of its showing, the Degenerate Art show reeled in five times as many visitors as its upmarket companion.

Around 112 artists were exhibited in this hugely popular show, among them Wassily Kandinsky, Otto Dix, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Max Beckmann and Oskar Kokoschka, who was widely considered one of Austria's greatest artists of the era.

The art of these anti-Nazi artists, however, hung side by side with some unexpected companions. Emil Nolde, a proud and long-serving member of the Nazi Party, found his creations tarred as degenerate, and his paintings featured heavily throughout the exhibition. It was a catastrophe for the artist, who had long been supported, promoted and patronised by none other than Goebbels.

Artworks vied for space on the walls and floors of the exhibition space with tags attached to each work that listed the price that galleries had paid to possess them. But with the dark, tumultuous days of the Weimar Republic and hyperinflation not even a decade prior, the costs were wildly exaggerated. On these seemingly eye-watering tags, a line read, "Paid for with hard-earned tax-payers' money."

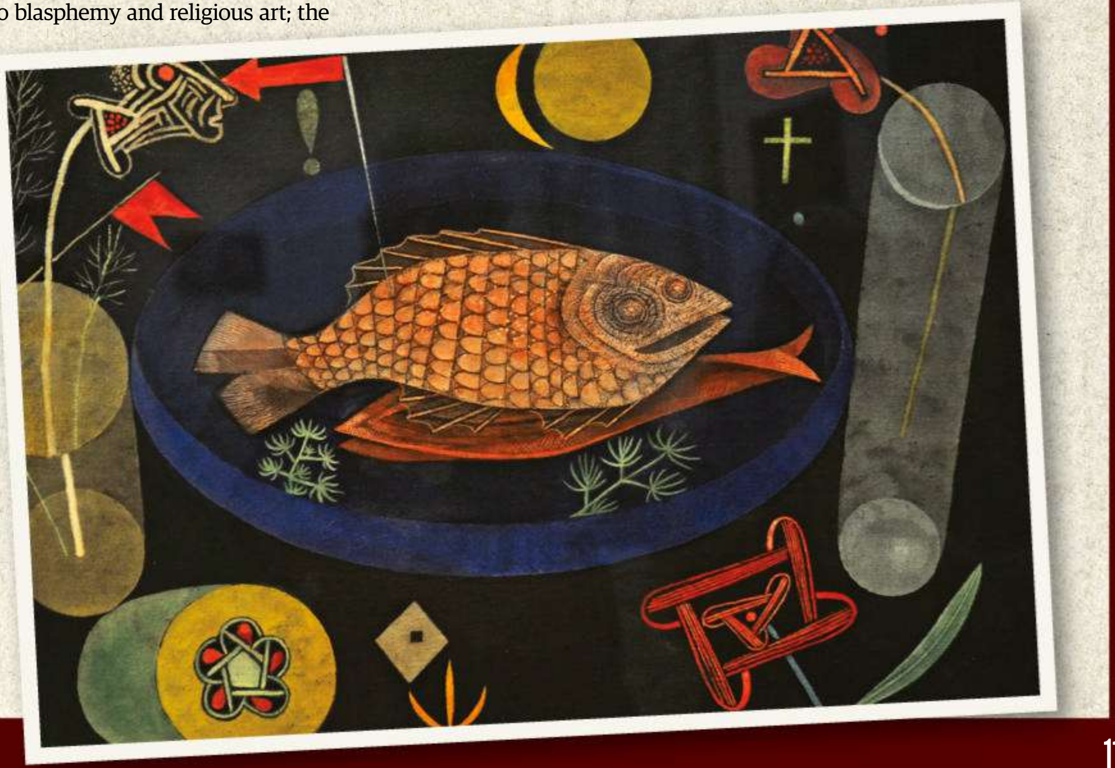
Surrounding the art, graffiti condemning the works was scrawled all over the walls: "Mockery of God", "An insult to German womanhood", "The ideal – cretin and whore".

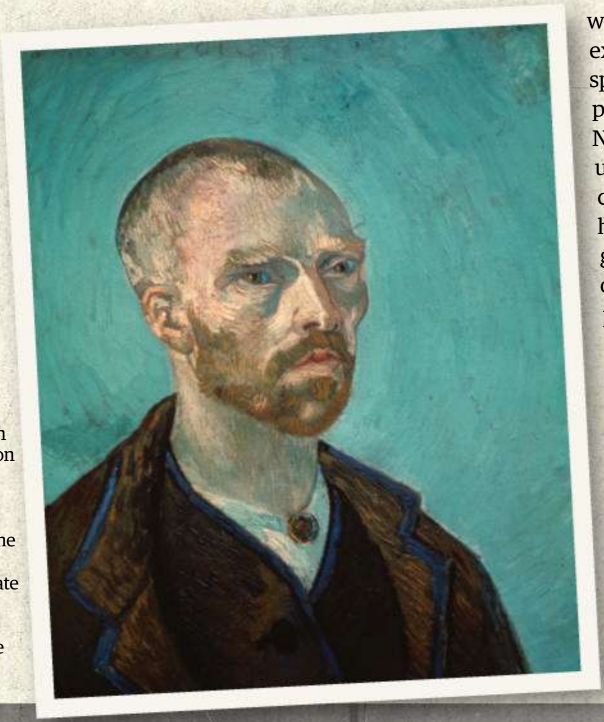
Spread across several rooms, only sections of the exhibition were themed. The show opened with a room devoted to blasphemy and religious art; the second room dealt with Jews; while a third contended with the salt-of-the-earth people of Germany: soldiers, women and farmers. The rest of the exhibition descended into unorganised chaos.

The Degenerate Art exhibition was purposefully a complete fiasco, an embarrassment to any curator. Paintings hung mere inches from one another and artworks were commonly misnamed or

**ABOVE** Crowds begin to gather around the entrance of the Degenerate Art exhibition, held in Munich's Galeriestraße

**BELOW** Paul Klee's *Around The Fish* was confiscated and exhibited in 1937





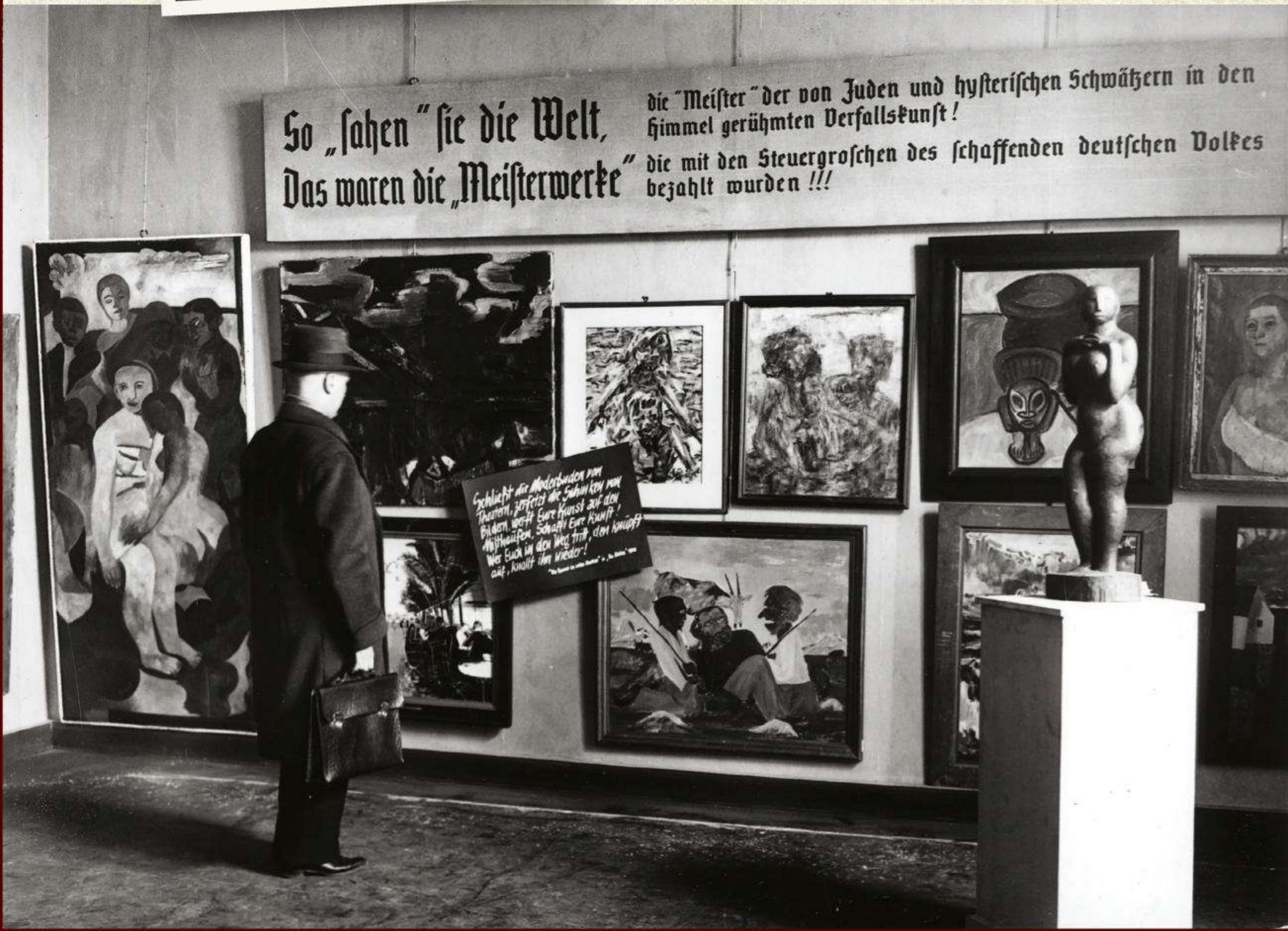
**RIGHT** Confiscated by the Nazis on 27 March 1938, this self-portrait by Vincent van Gogh was sold at auction in Switzerland a year later

wrongly attributed. Rather than an exhibition, this was a propaganda spectacle designed to enrage and provoke; it was exactly what the Nazis envisioned. These creations, unworthy in their eyes of being called "art", were unworthy of hanging on the walls of Germany's great gallery, and were unworthy of being seen by the German population.

When the exhibition opened on 19 July 1937, children were forbidden from attending for fear that they would be terrified - or worse, corrupted - by the obscenity of the art. For those who did attend, visitors were actively encouraged to interact with the art - actors were even hired to mingle with the crowd in order to provoke reactions. Some sneered, some shouted, some spat.

In the almost four-month run of the Degenerate Art exhibition, the show was considered one of the Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda's greatest successes. When it closed on 30 November, it had averaged around 20,000 visitors a day. With such exceptional engagement, the exhibition was taken on the road, visiting 11 other cities across Germany and Austria until it officially closed in 1941. More than just a popular exhibition, it proved to be one of the most powerful early Nazi propaganda campaigns, sending shockwaves not just throughout Germany, but across the world.

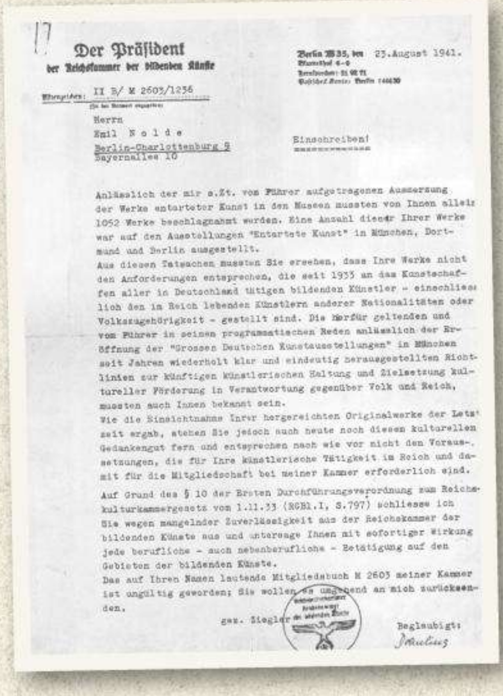
While many in Germany were glad to celebrate the 'worthy' art and culture of Nazi Germany, not all who visited the Degenerate Art exhibition were visiting for what the Nazis believed were the right reasons. Certainly, many visitors went to be shocked and to show their disdain for modern art, but for others the Degenerate


So „ſahen" ſie die Welt,
Das waren die „Meiſterwerke"
die "Meiſter" der von Juden und hyſteriſchen Schwätzern in den Himmel gerühmten Verfallskunſt!
die mit den Steuergroſchen des ſchaffenden deutſchen Volkes bezahlt wurden !!!
Schließt die Moderbuden von Theatern, zerfetzt die Schinken von Bildern, werft Eure Kunst auf den Misthaufen. Schafft Eure Kunst! Wer Euch in den Weg tritt, den knüpft auf, knallt ihn nieder!

**BELOW** Inside the gallery, artworks deemed degenerate hung alongside offensive slogans scrawled onto the walls

Art exhibition was an opportunity to say farewell forever to some of these contemporary masterpieces.

In the wake of the Degenerate Art exhibition, the collection was divided. Some works were destroyed, deemed worthless, while those considered valuable on an international market were flogged at auctions for cut-down prices, including works by van Gogh, Gauguin and Picasso.



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Der Präſident
der Reichskammer der bildenden Künſte

Berlin W35, den 23.August 1941.

II B/ M 2603/1236

Herrn
Emil Nolde
Berlin-Charlottenburg 9
Bayernallee 10

Einschreiben!

Anlässlich der mir s.Zt. vom Führer aufgetragenen Ausmerzung der Werke entarteter Kunst in den Museen mussten von Ihnen allein 1052 Werke beschlagnahmt werden. Eine Anzahl dieser Ihrer Werke war auf den Ausstellungen "Entartete Kunst" in München, Dortmund und Berlin ausgestellt.

Aus diesen Tatsachen mussten Sie ersehen, dass Ihre Werke nicht den Anforderungen entsprechen, die seit 1933 an das Kunstschaffen aller in Deutschland tätigen bildenden Künstler – einschliesslich den im Reich lebenden Künstlern anderer Nationalitäten oder Volkszugehörigkeit – gestellt sind. Die hierfür geltenden und vom Führer in seinen programmatischen Reden anlässlich der Eröffnung der "Grossen Deutschen Kunstausstellungen" in München seit Jahren wiederholt klar und eindeutig herausgestellten Richtlinien zur künftigen künstlerischen Haltung und Zielsetzung kultureller Förderung in Verantwortung gegenüber Volk und Reich, mussten auch Ihnen bekannt sein.

Wie die Einsichtnahme Ihrer hergereichten Originalwerke der Letztzeit ergab, stehen Sie jedoch auch heute noch diesem kulturellen Gedankengut fern und entsprechen nach wie vor nicht den Voraussetzungen, die für Ihre künstlerische Tätigkeit im Reich und damit für die Mitgliedschaft bei meiner Kammer erforderlich sind.

Auf Grund des § 10 der Ersten Durchführungsverordnung zum Reichskulturkammergesetz vom 1.11.33 (RGBl.I, S.797) schliesse ich Sie wegen mangelnder Zuverlässigkeit aus der Reichskammer der bildenden Künste aus und untersage Ihnen mit sofortiger Wirkung jede berufliche – auch nebenberufliche – Betätigung auf den Gebieten der bildenden Künste.

Das auf Ihren Namen lautende Mitgliedsbuch M 2603 meiner Kammer ist ungültig geworden; Sie wollen es umgehend an mich zurücksenden.

gez. Ziegler

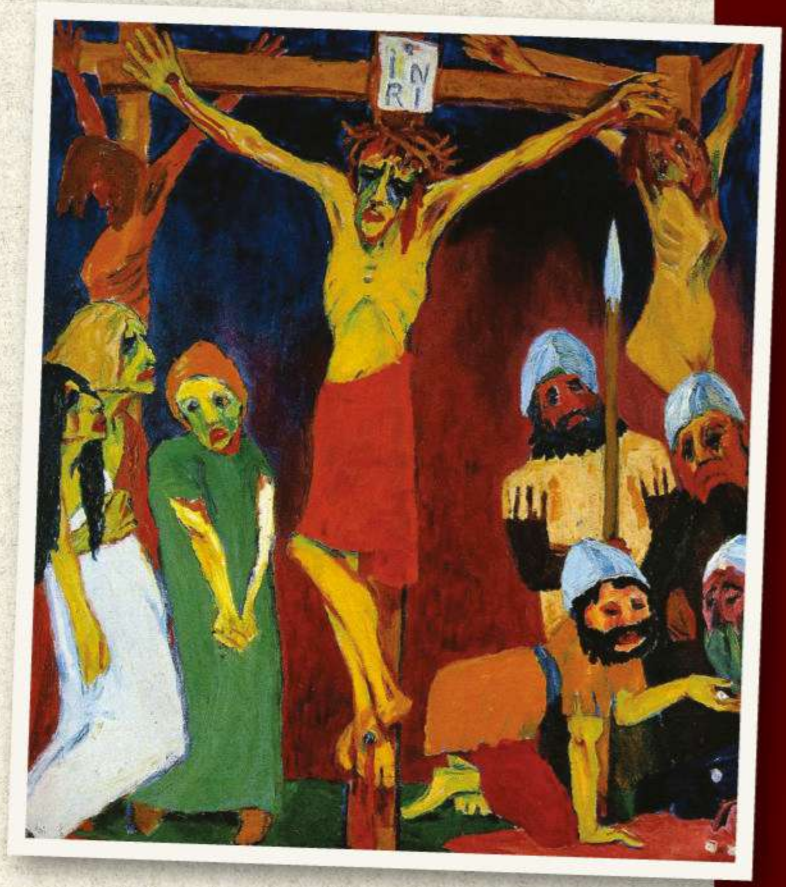
Beglaubigt:
Jaculus

**LEFT** A letter sent from Ziegler to Emil Nolde, which declares that the artist's works have been deemed degenerate

In the ultimate act of hypocrisy, many degenerate works of art that were looted and sold by the Nazis were acquired by the very men who sold them, bargain-hunters on the prowl for their next fortune. The rest ended up dispersed across the world or tragically lost.

But what of the artists whose reputations were ruined by the Degenerate Art exhibition? Formerly Austria's greatest artist, Oskar Kokoschka fled to Czechoslovakia, then later the UK, before settling in Switzerland where he died in 1980. Utterly ruined by his fall from grace, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner killed himself in 1938. Max Beckmann, like Kokoschka, escaped into exile. The once-proud Nazi Emil Nolde was banned from ever painting again by his one-time compatriots, so took up watercolours, a medium that didn't smell and was therefore easy to hide. All degenerate artists who worked in universities and art schools lost their positions.

Many of the artists who unwillingly starred in the Degenerate Art exhibition are today little more than just names on paper. With careers cut down in their prime, we'll never truly know what could have become of some of these creative geniuses.



**ABOVE** Despite being a member of the Nazi Party himself, Emil Nolde was deemed a degenerate and this Crucifixion scene hung in the Degenerate Art exhibition

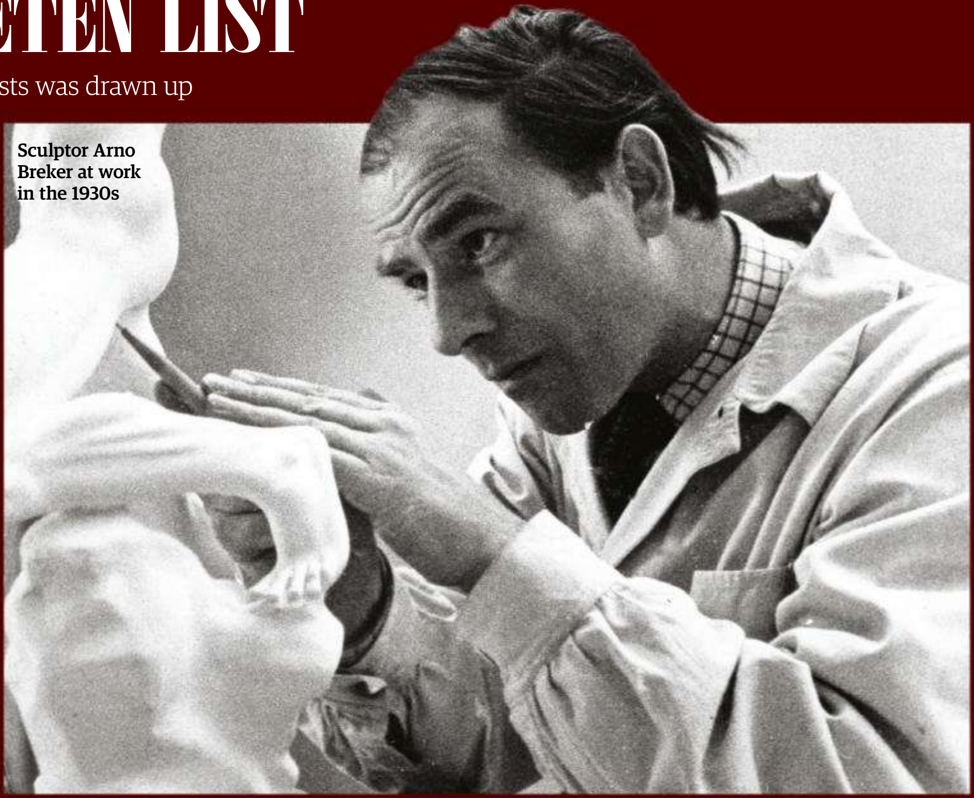
# THE GOTTBEGNADETEN LIST

In a bid to build Nazi culture, a list of very special artists was drawn up

In the wake of the Degenerate Art exhibition Hitler and Goebbels were determined to see Nazi culture blossom and grow. In 1944 a record entitled the 'Gottbegnadeten' list – or 'God-gifted' list – was drawn up, featuring artists, musicians, actors, authors and other creatives that were considered national treasures. Among these prized figures were composer Richard Strauss, Nobel Prize-winning writer Gerhart Hauptmann and actor Heinz Rühmann. The honour meant that a letter was sent to the recipient, but it also guaranteed that the recipient was exempt from military mobilisation; these figures' contributions to culture were deemed more valuable than they could be in war.

Arno Breker was one such artist who found himself on the God-gifted list. Championed as one of the greatest sculptors of the Third Reich, Breker had created sculptures for the 1936 Olympic Games, as well as creating two bronze sculptures to stand outside the Reich Chancellery. Exempt from military service, Breker was appointed the official sculptor of the Nazi Party and was gifted a studio, as well as almost 50 assistants.

By the time the Third Reich crumbled, Breker's reputation had spread far and wide. Identified as a 'fellow traveller' of the Nazi Party than necessarily a Nazi himself, Breker was fined and left to continue his life in Düsseldorf. Over the next few decades he was commissioned by several wealthy and powerful patrons, including the King of Morocco. In 1985 a museum devoted to Breker's works opened in Nörvenich, Germany. He died in 1991 still a celebrated German artist, but many of his list-mates died in relative obscurity, their talent irrevocably tarnished by their relationships with the Nazis.



Sculptor Arno Breker at work in the 1930s

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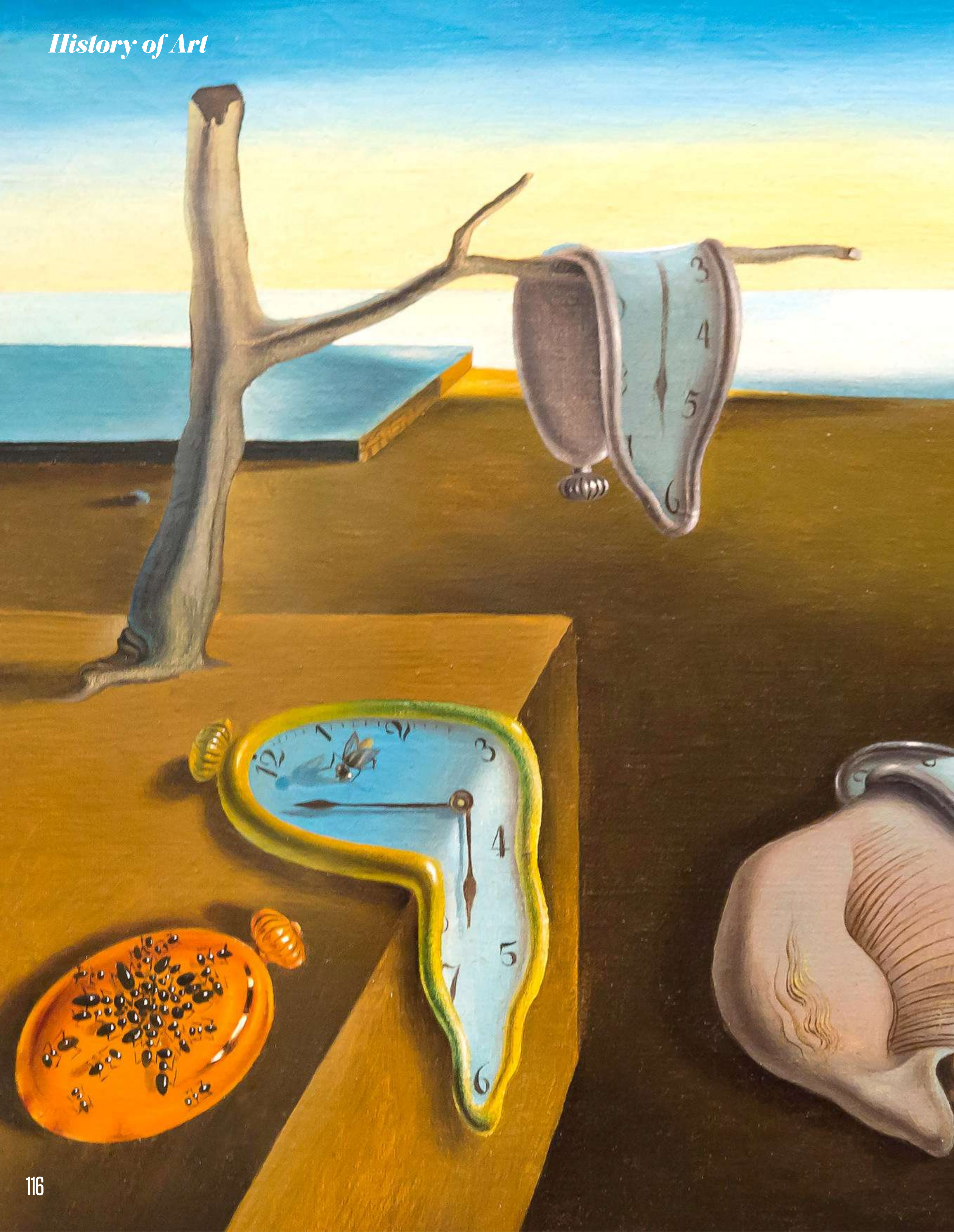
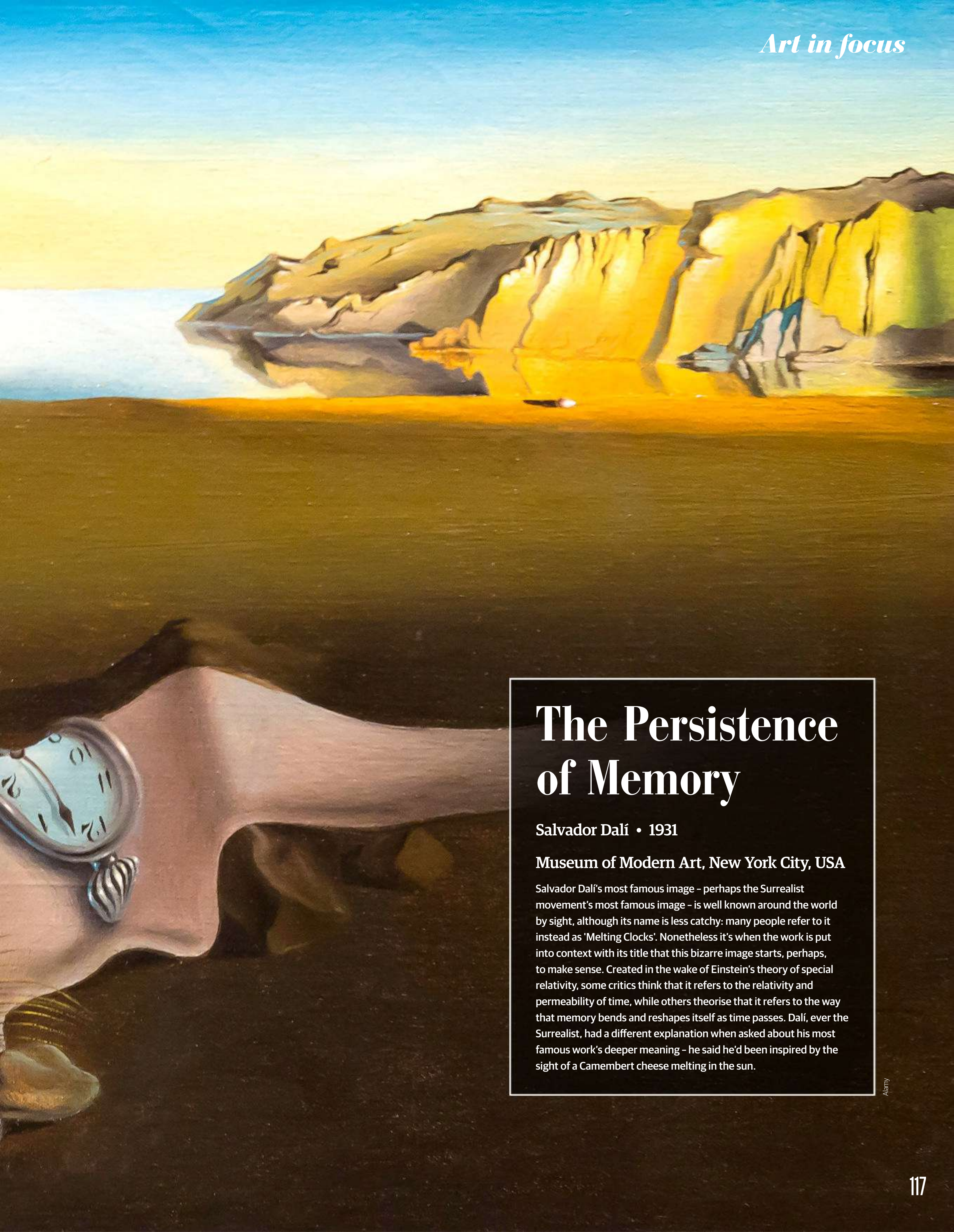




# The Persistence of Memory

### Salvador Dalí • 1931

### Museum of Modern Art, New York City, USA

Salvador Dalí's most famous image – perhaps the Surrealist movement's most famous image – is well known around the world by sight, although its name is less catchy: many people refer to it instead as 'Melting Clocks'. Nonetheless it's when the work is put into context with its title that this bizarre image starts, perhaps, to make sense. Created in the wake of Einstein's theory of special relativity, some critics think that it refers to the relativity and permeability of time, while others theorise that it refers to the way that memory bends and reshapes itself as time passes. Dalí, ever the Surrealist, had a different explanation when asked about his most famous work's deeper meaning – he said he'd been inspired by the sight of a Camembert cheese melting in the sun.

Alamy

# Face to Face with Frida Kahlo

Enduring a life of physical and emotional pain, this iconic Mexican artist reinvented herself through her surreal portraits

Written by Philippa Grafton

Her cheek pressed against the cool glass of the window, little Frida Kahlo gazed wistfully at the outside world. Confined to her bed to recover from a severe bout of polio, Frida had been deemed too fragile to step outdoors - and in her solitude, she found herself longing for a friend. She pulled her head back and exhaled on the windowpane. If she couldn’t see her own friends, she’d just have to make up her own. Raising a frail finger, she drew a door in the misted glass and slipped through it. Walking across a field, she reached a small dairy shop - Pinzón - and clambered through its letter ‘O’ into the innards of the Earth. Here, she stood face-to-face with a girl, beaming.

**INSET** Frida, age 11, photographed by her father

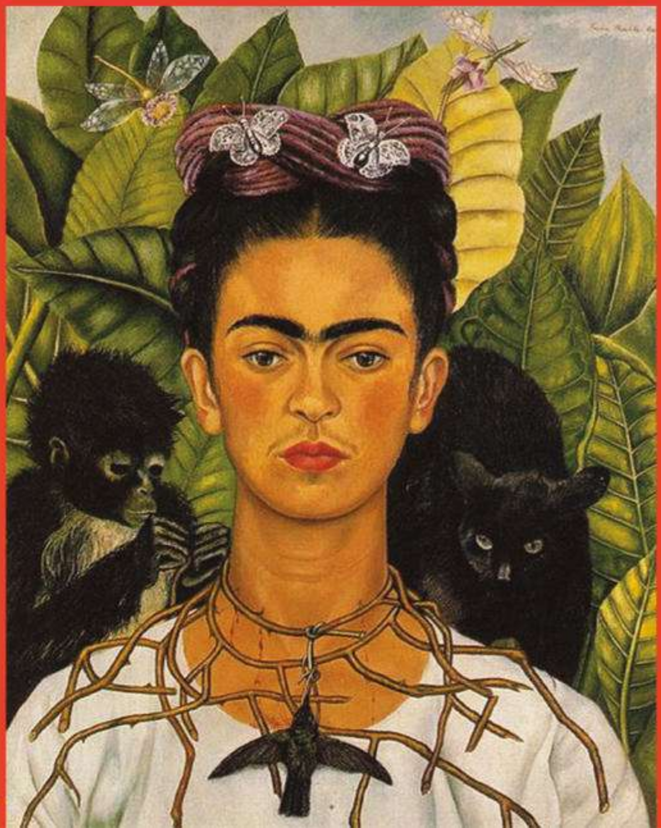
In young Frida’s make-believe world, her imaginary friend waited for her daily. Endlessly joyful and lively, this imaginary friend was the polar opposite of the sickly six-year-old that created her. Where Frida was morose, her friend was happy; where Frida limped and struggled with her ailing right leg, her friend danced. It was in this fictitious land where Frida felt most happy.

Born in 1907 to Guillermo Kahlo and his second wife, Matilde, Frida was the third of the couple’s four daughters. A photographer by trade, Frida’s German father had emigrated to Mexico in 1891 after a severe epileptic fit and disagreements with his stepmother put a swift halt to his education in his homeland. Having been consigned to her bed for months after contracting polio at the age of six, Frida grew close to her father, whose shared experience of severe illness bonded the two. While Frida recovered, Guillermo shared his passion for creativity and philosophy with her, and once she was strong enough, he encouraged her to take up sports to strengthen her right leg, which was stunted and skinny as a result of polio.

Despite starting her education later than her peers, by 1922 Frida was one of 35 girls that had been accepted into the National Preparatory School, an elite academy of 2,000 students. The school’s headteacher claimed the young girl was the leader of a “band of juvenile delinquents who raised such uproars in the school that [he] had considered quitting his job”. While she may have been mischievous, Frida also thrived academically and harboured dreams of becoming a doctor.

But while Frida’s formative years began to mould her, Mexico was in chaos. Its president, 80-year-old Porfirio Díaz, had vowed to stand down from the 1910 elections, only to backtrack and then rig the vote to ensure that he won an eighth

**BELOW** *Self Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*, 1940



**ABOVE** Frida's wheelchair and specially designed easel in the Blue House, now a museum to her art

**ABOVE RIGHT** Frida and Diego in their New York home after he was fired in May 1933

**BELOW LEFT** This was a gift to her doctor

**BELOW MIDDLE** Frida painting in 1931

**BELOW MIDDLE** Her 1946 *Tree of Hope* shows her both as a victim and survivor

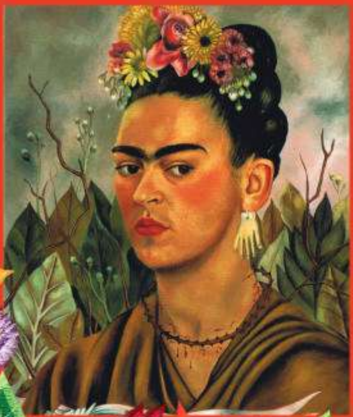
term. In the process, he insulted those who dreamed of democracy in Mexico. Díaz triggered what became known as the Mexican Revolution from 1910-20, and by 1911 he had been ousted, his oppressive regime in ruins. But Díaz's successors were no more successful – power was juggled between tyrants, puppets and incapable politicians. By 1917, the Mexican Constitution was drafted, and the revolution largely slowed in the period that followed. In the ensuing years, citizens demanded the reforms promised to them by the Constitution, and the newly elected President Alvaro Obregón was seemingly the man to deliver them. Obregón instigated the rebirth of Mexican culture, encouraging a sense of nationalism that filtered through all walks of Mexican society. His reforms provided stability and security to Mexico's peasants, while his left-leaning cultural endeavours meant that like-minded artists, such as the famous muralist Diego Rivera, thrived. Even after Obregón's assassination, his successors continued his semi-socialist vision for Mexico, and Mexico rapidly became a mecca for liberal thinkers, including philosophers, artists and writers alike. For Frida, this burgeoning renaissance was the epitome of Mexican identity. She identified herself as a child of the revolution, even moving her birth year forward by three years to coincide with the Mexican Revolution.

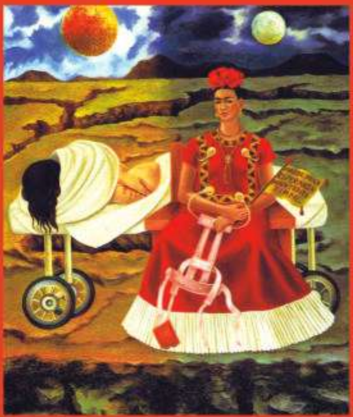
On 17 September 1925, Frida's life changed forever. On her way back home from school, her bus catastrophically crashed with a streetcar, leaving several people dead and almost killing Frida. The force of the impact had shattered her already feeble right leg, crushed her feet and fractured several ribs and her collarbone, as well as dislodging three vertebrae. The streetcar's handrail had also impaled Frida, entering through her abdomen and coming out through her groin. She spent months recovering, first at hospital and later at home, confined to the same bedroom of her youth. Forced to abandon higher education, any dreams of becoming a doctor lay shattered among the debris and bodies that fateful day.

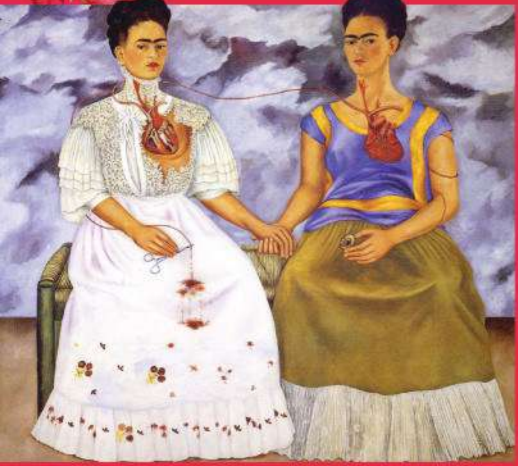
As she lay bed-ridden, however, Frida sought a means to keep her mind and body occupied. Having shown promise in painting before the accident, a custom-made easel was set up on Frida's bed, with a mirror pointing towards Frida hanging above. While she recovered, she painted anything she could – self-portraits, her sisters, friends – even decorating her stifling body cast and orthopaedic corsets.

By 1927, however, Frida had recovered well. Her injuries would haunt her for the rest of her life, but soon her mind would be occupied with happier thoughts. That year, Frida joined the Mexican Communist Party, where she became acquainted with a new and elite circle of intellectuals and creatives. One of these was Diego Rivera, whose patriotic art had seen him shoot to fame and glory in the wake of the Mexican Revolution. Diego was 20 years Frida's senior, twice married and a reputed womaniser, but Frida was smitten. It wasn't Frida's first brush with the famed muralist – in 1922 he had painted at her school, where the young student had allegedly remarked that she would marry him one day. The two quickly fell in love, and by 1929 the couple had wed. Diego's work saw them travel to the United States, first to San Francisco, where Frida's work was exhibited for the first time at the Sixth Annual Exhibition of the San Francisco Society of Women Artists, and later to Detroit and New York.

> "Frida was sickened by America's wealth and the nation's obsession with capitalism"







**ABOVE** *The Two Fridas*, painted by Kahlo in 1939

Frida never truly took to life in America. She was sickened by the wealth and appalled by the nation's obsession with capitalism. In a letter written during her time in the US, she was "convinced it's only through communism that we can become human". She longed for home. In December 1933, her wish was granted. After Diego was fired from a commission in the Rockefeller Center for refusing to remove the face of Lenin from a mural, the pair returned to Mexico, with Diego's reputation in the United States in tatters.

Frida and Diego's marriage was the very antithesis of conventional. Back in Mexico, they lived in two separate houses joined by a bridge, and both were notorious adulterers. Despite her own infidelities, Frida was devastated to discover her husband's affair with her own sister, Cristina. For weeks she contemplated divorce, before eventually reconciling with them both.

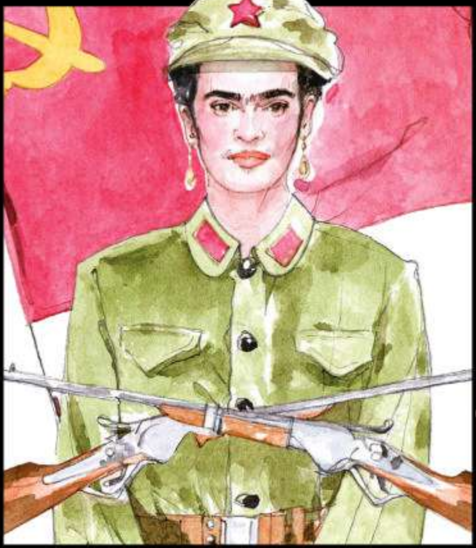
All might have been forgiven, but it certainly wasn't forgotten. When the exiled Leon Trotsky and his wife, Natalia, arrived in Mexico in 1937, it was only a matter of time before Frida sought retaliation for her husband's indiscretions.

Housed in La Casa Azul - meaning 'The Blue House', Frida's childhood home - Trotsky was quickly seduced by the vivacious and intelligent Frida. Their affair was brief but passionate. Frida and Trotsky secretly exchanged love letters hidden beneath the covers of books, and the pair spoke only in English to their spouses' bafflement - but by the end of the year, it was all over. Natalia and Diego had uncovered the truth, and after months of bitter disagreements between the men, Trotsky and his wife moved out of the Blue House in April 1939. Just over a year later, Trotsky was assassinated in Mexico.

In 1939, Frida and Diego's marital problems proved to be too much, and

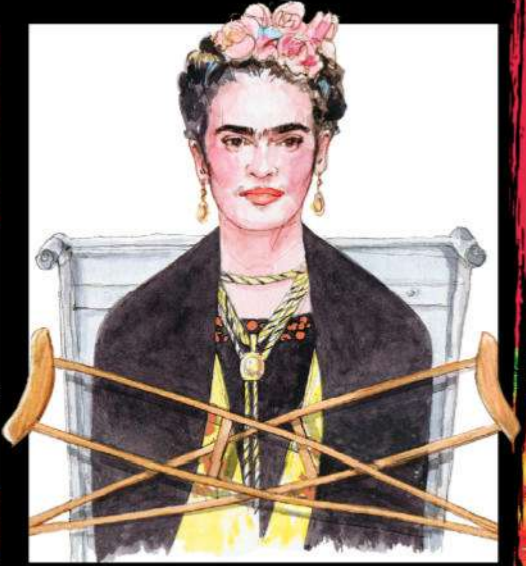
# The Many Faces of Frida Kahlo

Frida was more than just an artist - she was a force of nature



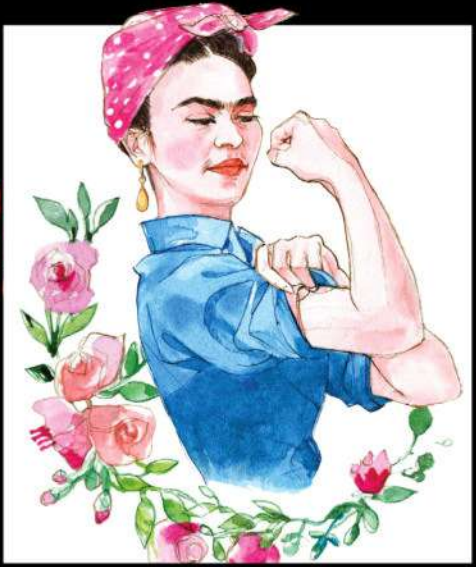
## The Communist

Frida wasn't afraid to use her political voice to express her standpoint. A firm believer in the socialist reforms following the Mexican Revolution, Frida joined the Communist Party early in her life, and became a devout member in her final years. In 1953, she described herself as "an unconditional ally of the Communist revolutionary movement. For the first time in my life my painting is trying to help in the line set by the Party."



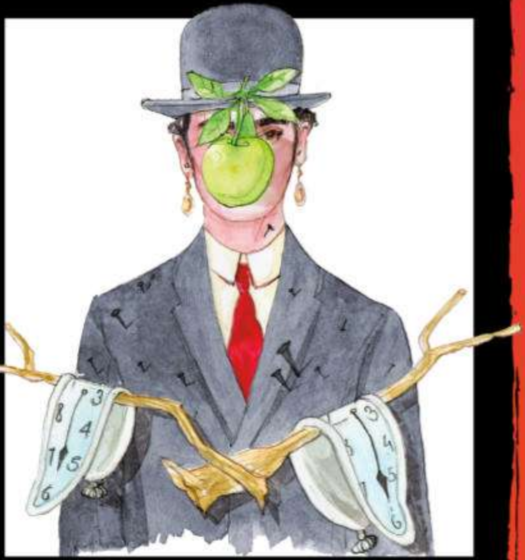
## The Disabled

After recovering from polio at the age of six, Frida's right leg remained shorter and skinnier than her left, and she was ridiculed by her peers, who called her 'Frida the peg-leg'. But this cruel nickname hardened the young girl, and even after the horrific accident in 1925, Frida had learnt to hide her pain. Instead of merely accepting her injuries, she embraced them as a vital part of her identity.



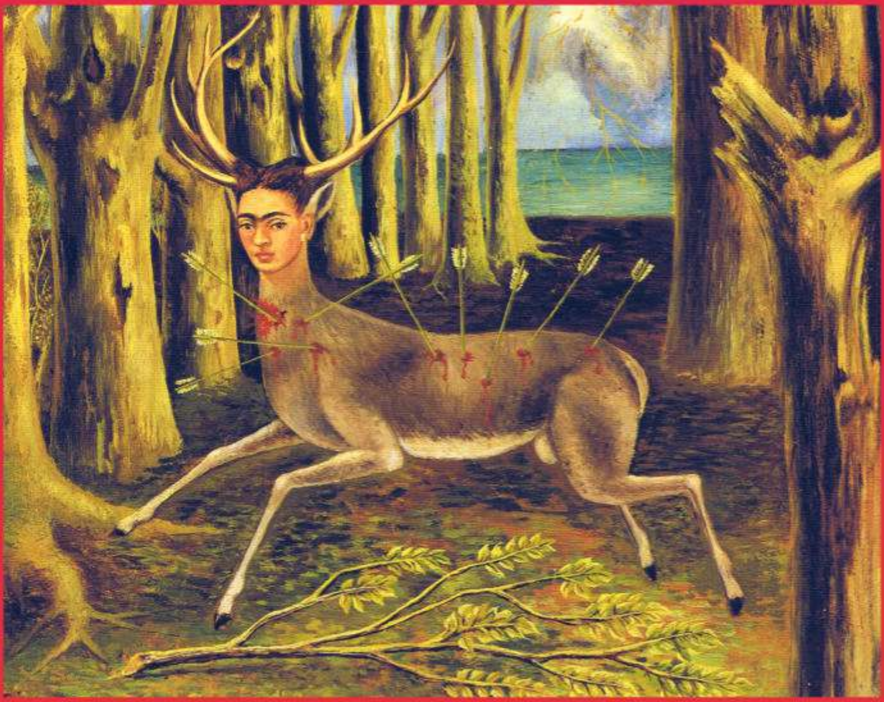
## The Feminist

In recent decades, Frida has been championed as a symbol of women's expression thanks to her frank and emotional depictions of her own trauma, but also for defying gender norms of the time. Frida's intimate paintings reveal a woman determined to break the mould, so it's no wonder that she's lauded as a feminist icon today.



## The Surrealist

Revered today as one of the great surrealist painters of the mid-20th century, Frida herself was keen to keep a certain amount of distance between her personal, intimate self-portraits and the kooky artistic movement, explaining, "I never painted dreams. I painted my own reality."



"While Frida retreated from the world, her heartbreak proved the perfect fodder for her creativity"

the pair divorced in November. Frida moved back into The Blue House, where she fondly reflected on her happy memories - in particular, recollections of her childhood imaginary friend inspired her to create *The Two Fridas*. But while Frida retreated from the world, her heartbreak proved the perfect fodder for her creativity, and from 1939-40 she painted some of her most acclaimed masterpieces, including *Self Portrait With Cropped Hair* and *The Wounded Table*, depicting the emotional devastation that she'd experienced at the hands of her husband. Their separation was only temporary, however, and in 1940 Diego and Frida remarried.

By this time, Frida had made a name for herself as an artist in her own right. No longer just the wife of Diego Rivera, Frida's work was in demand. But with her rise in popularity came a decline in her health. In almost constant agony and unable to stand or sit for long periods of time because of her back, Frida turned to alcohol and drugs to self-medicate. In 1945 Frida flew to New York to receive state-of-the-art surgery on her spine, but the operation was a disaster and left Frida in even more pain. This was yet more inspiration for her creativity, and arguably her most famous work - *The Broken Column* - expresses the emotional and physical pain that Frida suffered in the aftermath. Further surgery in 1950 failed, with multiple follow-up operations required to combat infection.

Despite the crippling pain, Frida rekindled her passion for politics. She rejoined the Mexican Communist Party (having revoked her membership in solidarity with her husband following his expulsion from the Party back in 1929), and once again became active in voicing her socialist dreams for Mexico through her art. In 1954, Frida painted *Self Portrait With Stalin*, an ode to the communist leader who had ordered the assassination of Trotsky over a decade before.

In 1950, Frida took another turn for the worse, and she was diagnosed with gangrene in her right foot. In spite of her failing health, Frida was determined to continue working. The following months were tumultuous, with Frida in and out of hospital, or confined for months on end to bed rest. When her 1953 solo exhibition launched at the Contemporary Art Gallery of Mexico in April, her doctors had expressly forbidden her to attend, insisting that she remain in bed. Famously, she obeyed their orders by having her four-poster bed transported into the gallery.

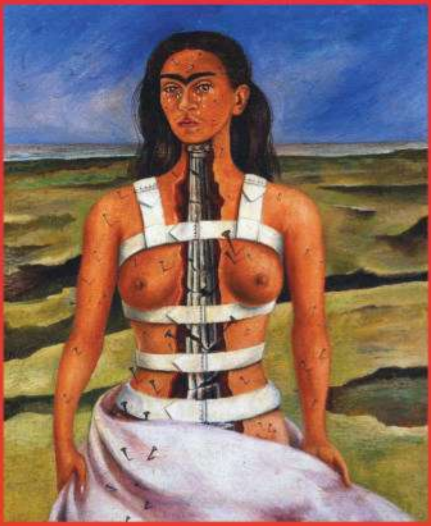
Frida never recovered from the past decade of illness, and in August 1953 her right leg was amputated at the knee. In the face of such trauma, Frida seemed defiant, determined to exude power and strength to the very end - but behind the curtain another scene was unravelling. With her health rapidly deteriorating, Frida spiralled into depression. In February 1954, Frida wrote, "They amputated my leg six months ago. It seemed to me centuries of torture and at times I nearly went crazy. I still feel like committing suicide. Diego prevents me from doing it in the vain belief that maybe he will need me. He has told me so and I believe him. But I have never suffered so much in my life. I'll wait a while."

Less than six months later, Frida was dead. Though officially recorded as a pulmonary embolism, it's thought that she committed suicide by overdose. Her last diary entry reveals the face that Frida hid behind a mask of bravado: "Thanks to the doctors… Thanks to the nurses, to the stretcher-bearers, to the cleaning women and attendants… I hope the exit is joyful - and I hope never to return."

In life, Frida Kahlo's reality was cruel and unkind; beneath the powerful and defiant facade, Frida was fragile and self-conscious of her ailing, shattered body. But in death, Kahlo has indeed returned - as an iconic figure, a champion of women, and as Mexico's greatest artist.

**ABOVE LEFT** Frida greets Trotsky and his wife Natalia as they arrive in Mexico

**ABOVE RIGHT** Frida shows herself as a wounded, but still strong, deer in this 1946 painting



**RIGHT** This was a gift to her doctor

© Diego Riviera and Frida Kahlo archives , Nickolas Muray Photo Archives, Alamy, Getty Images

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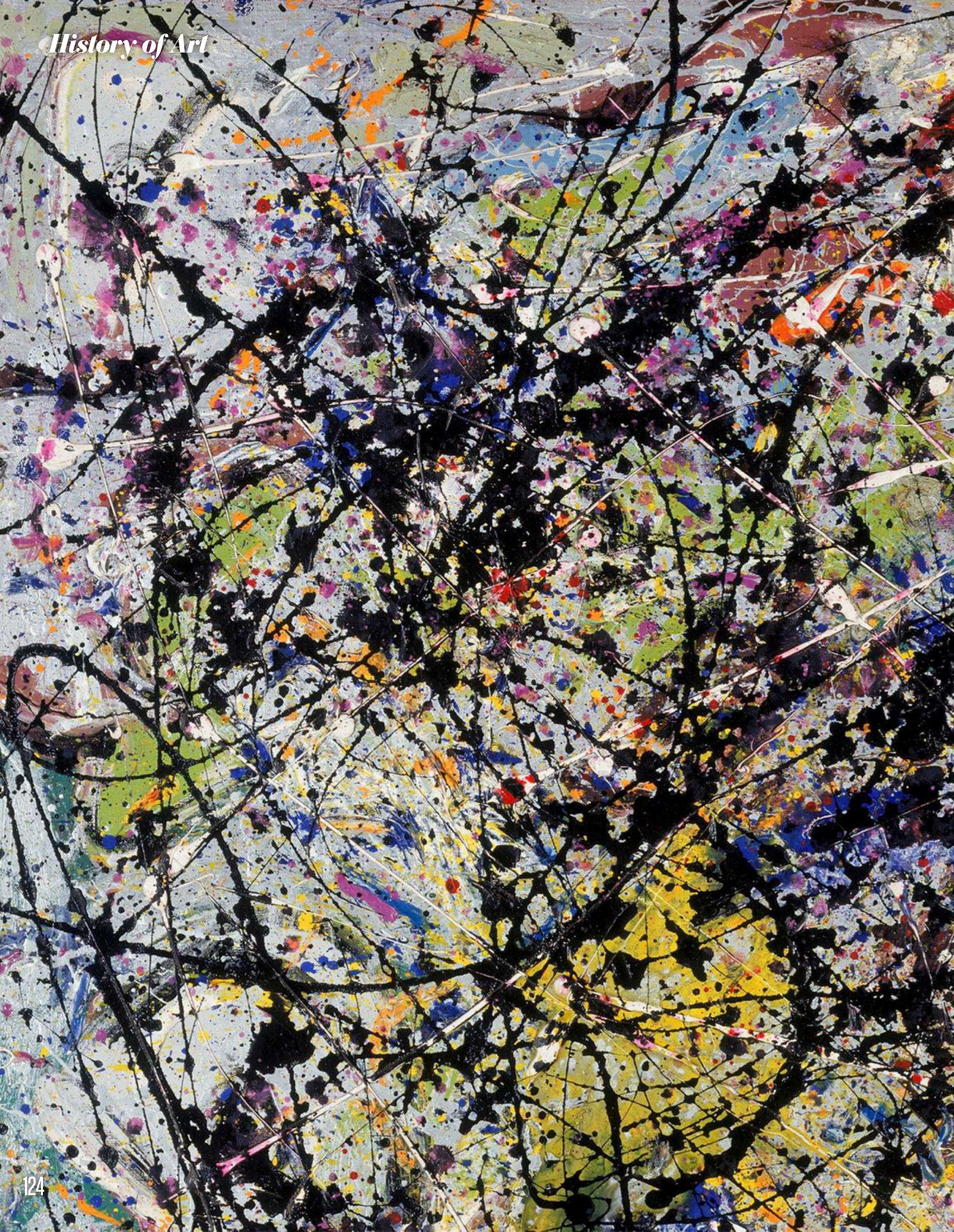

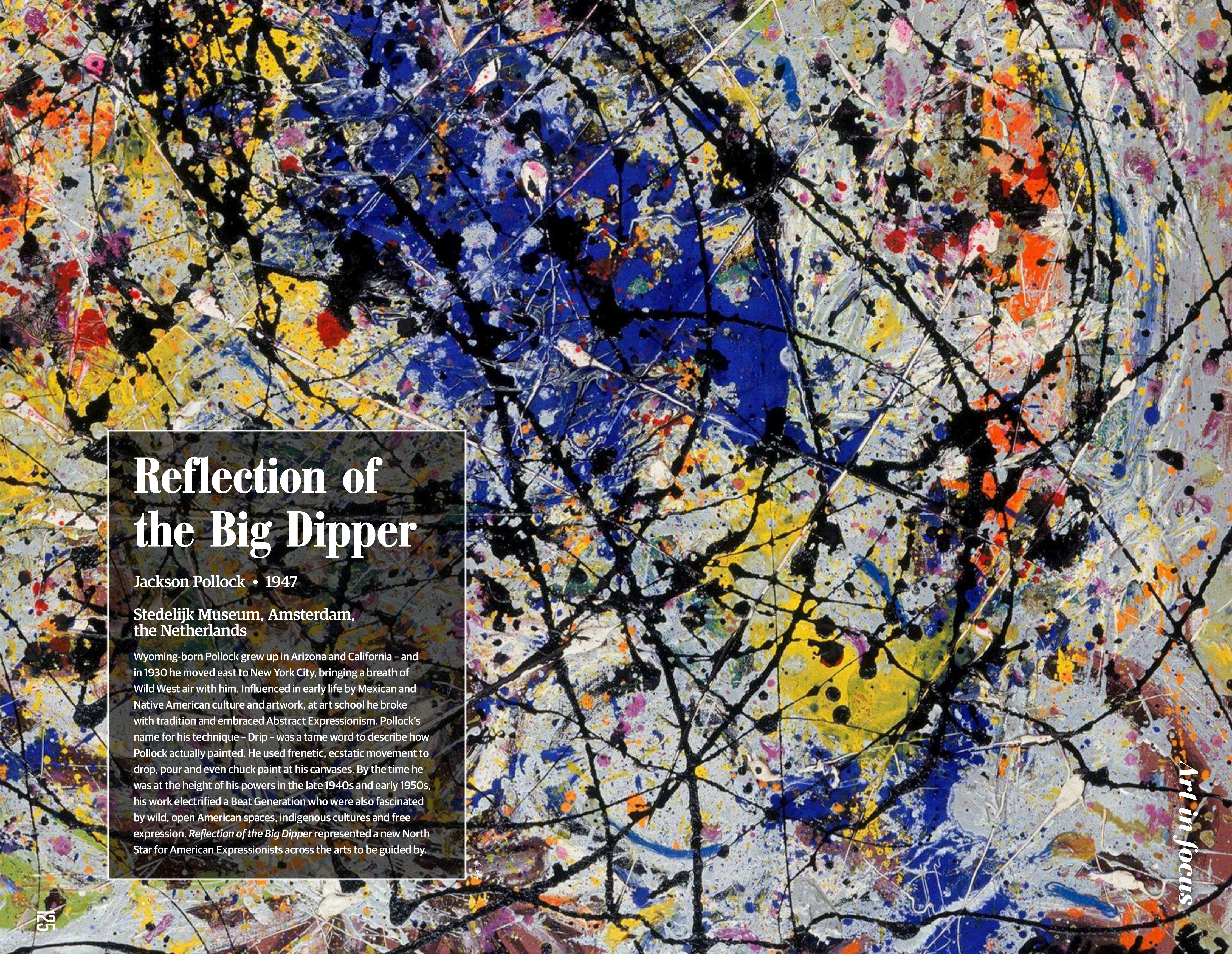

# Reflection of the Big Dipper

Jackson Pollock • 1947

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Wyoming-born Pollock grew up in Arizona and California – and in 1930 he moved east to New York City, bringing a breath of Wild West air with him. Influenced in early life by Mexican and Native American culture and artwork, at art school he broke with tradition and embraced Abstract Expressionism. Pollock's name for his technique – Drip – was a tame word to describe how Pollock actually painted. He used frenetic, ecstatic movement to drop, pour and even chuck paint at his canvases. By the time he was at the height of his powers in the late 1940s and early 1950s, his work electrified a Beat Generation who were also fascinated by wild, open American spaces, indigenous cultures and free expression. *Reflection of the Big Dipper* represented a new North Star for American Expressionists across the arts to be guided by.

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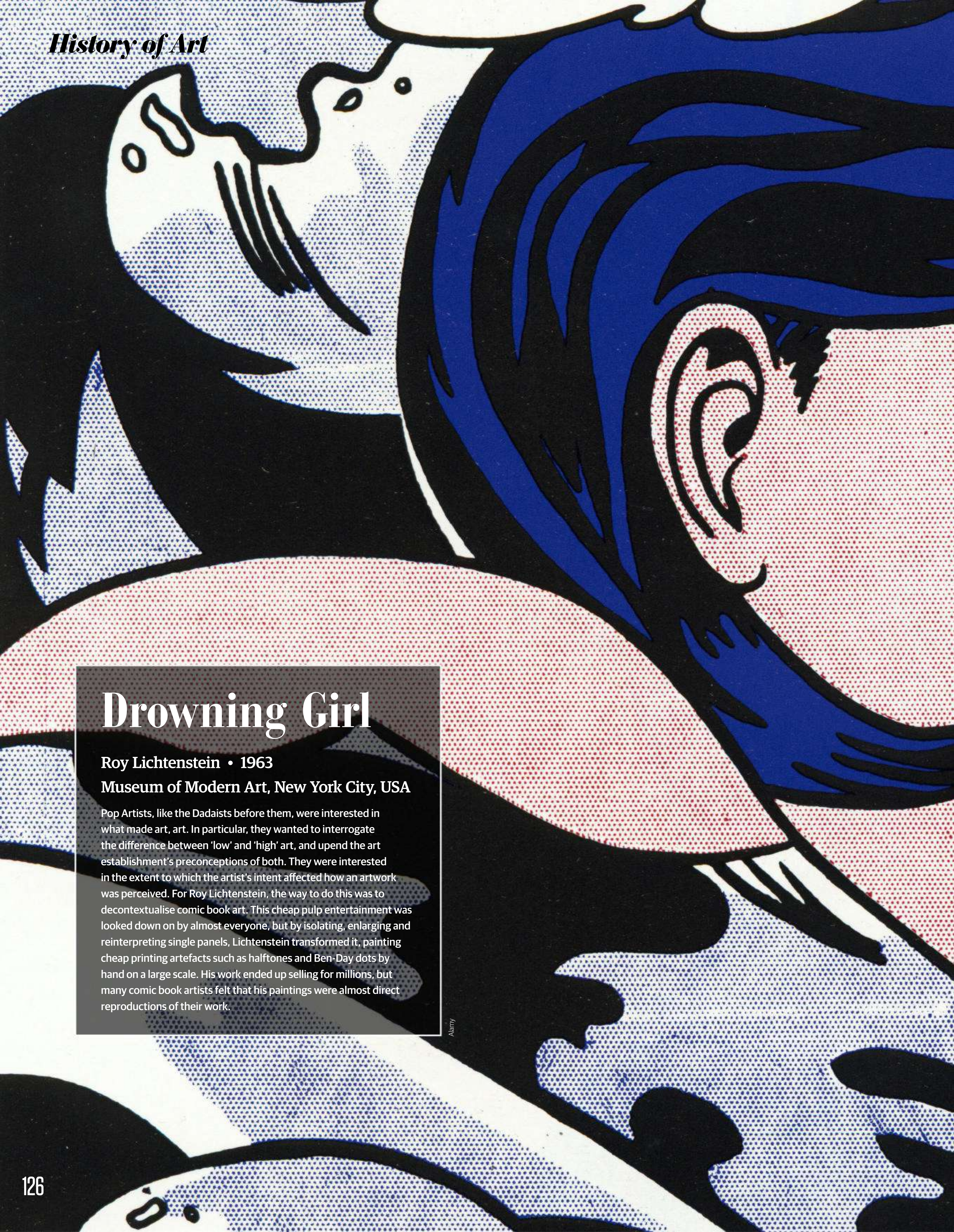

# Drowning Girl

## Roy Lichtenstein • 1963

## Museum of Modern Art, New York City, USA

Pop Artists, like the Dadaists before them, were interested in what made art, art. In particular, they wanted to interrogate the difference between 'low' and 'high' art, and upend the art establishment's preconceptions of both. They were interested in the extent to which the artist's intent affected how an artwork was perceived. For Roy Lichtenstein, the way to do this was to decontextualise comic book art. This cheap pulp entertainment was looked down on by almost everyone, but by isolating, enlarging and reinterpreting single panels, Lichtenstein transformed it, painting cheap printing artefacts such as halftones and Ben-Day dots by hand on a large scale. His work ended up selling for millions, but many comic book artists felt that his paintings were almost direct reproductions of their work.

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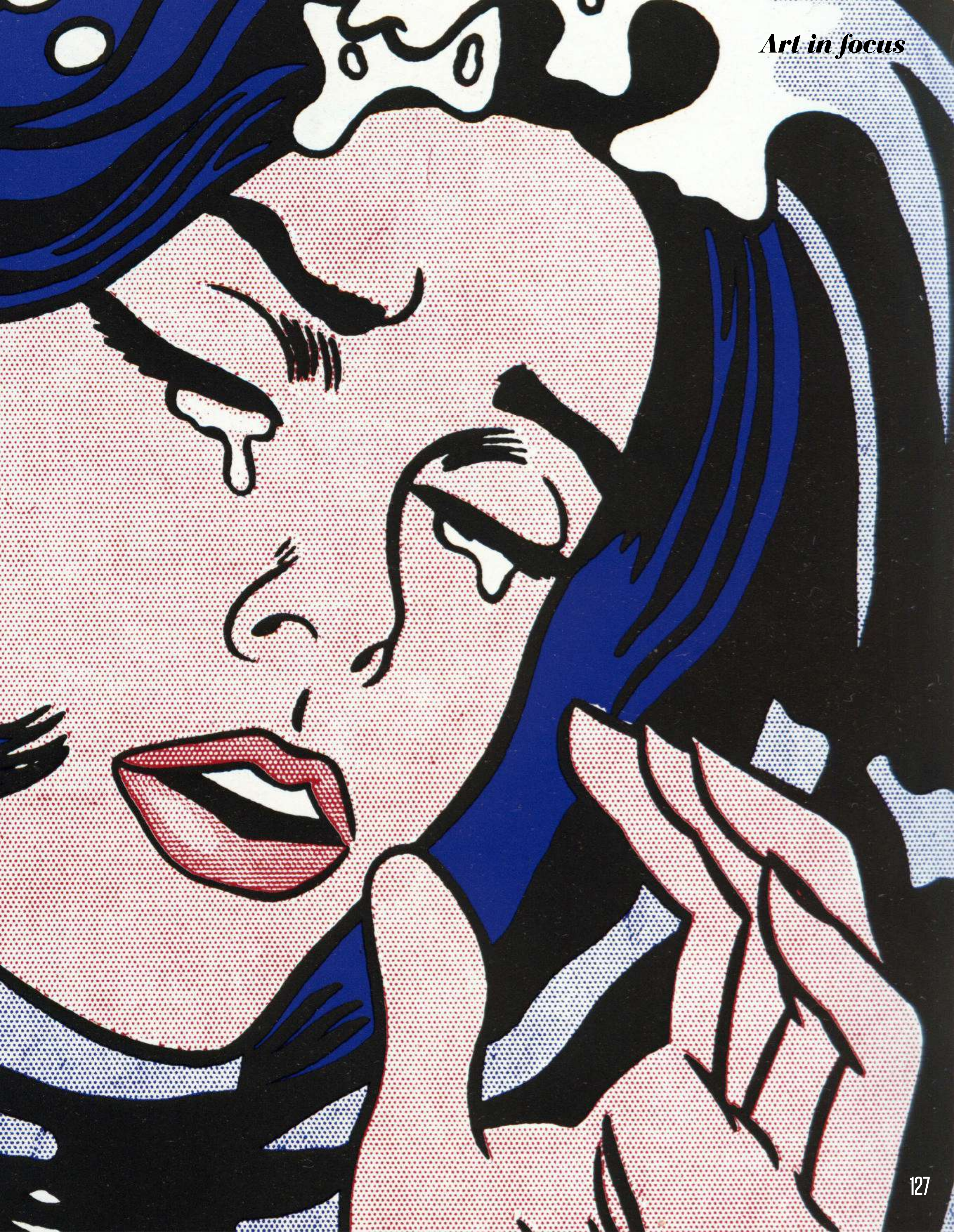

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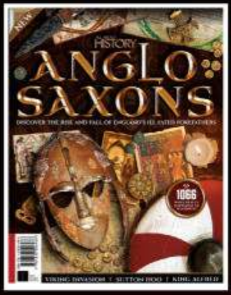
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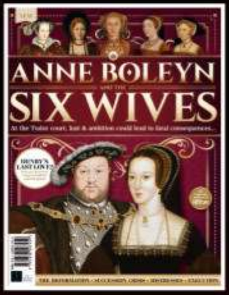
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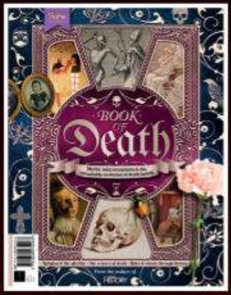
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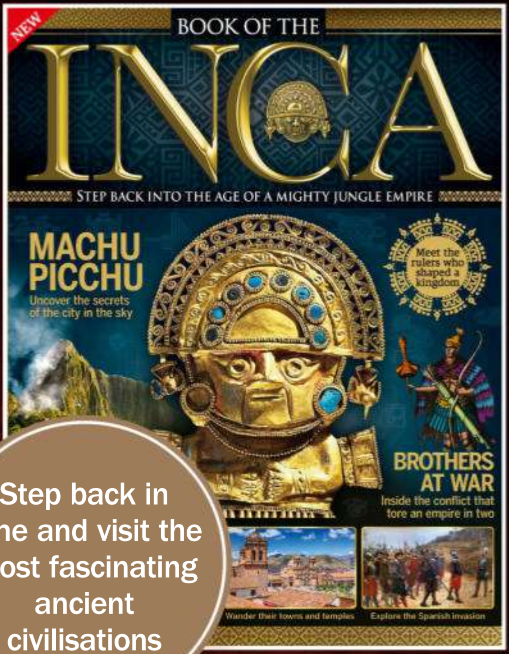
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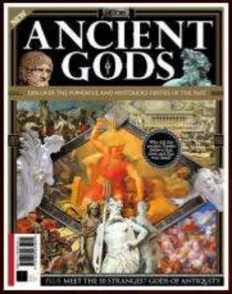
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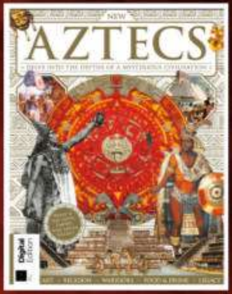

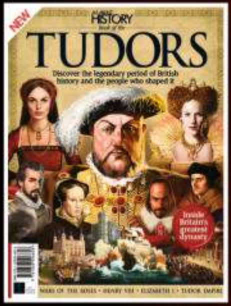

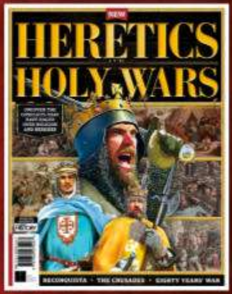
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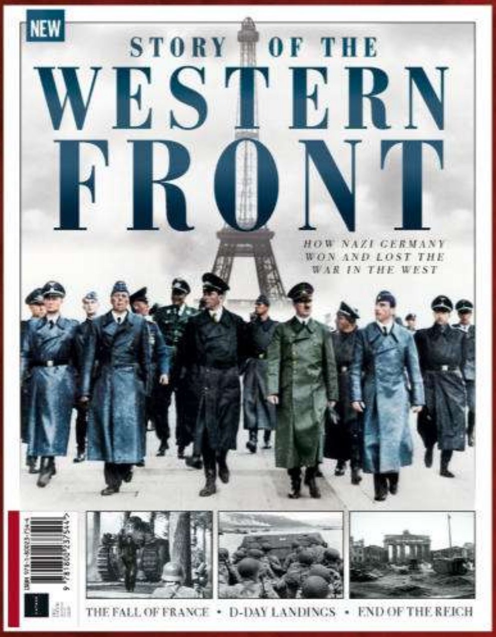
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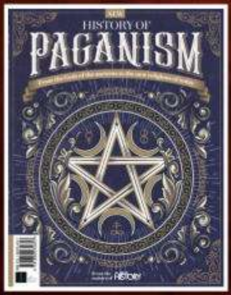
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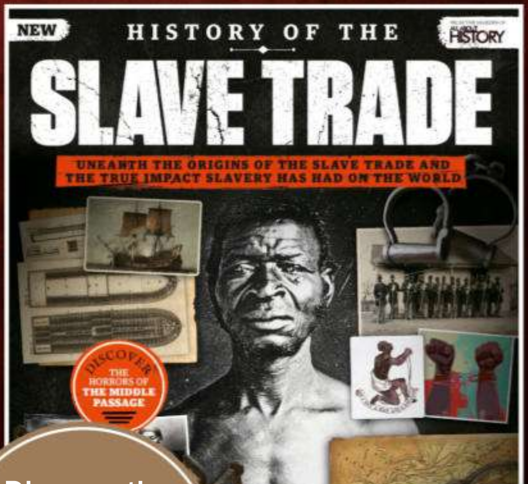
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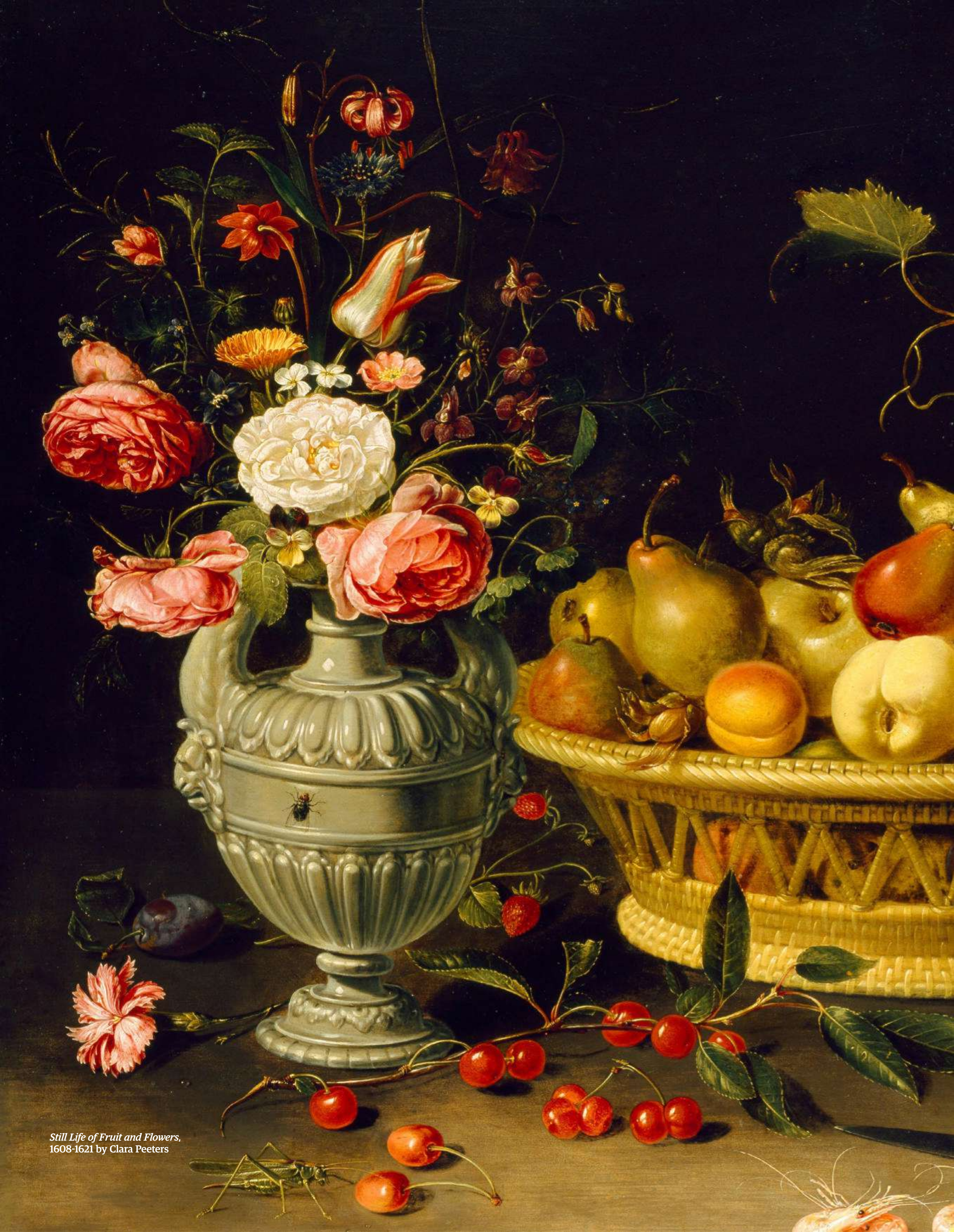

*Still Life of Fruit and Flowers,*
1608-1621 by Clara Peeters

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Printed in the UK

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**History of Art First Edition (AHB6300)**
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